# The TRAIL BLAZERS

LAWTON B. EVANS

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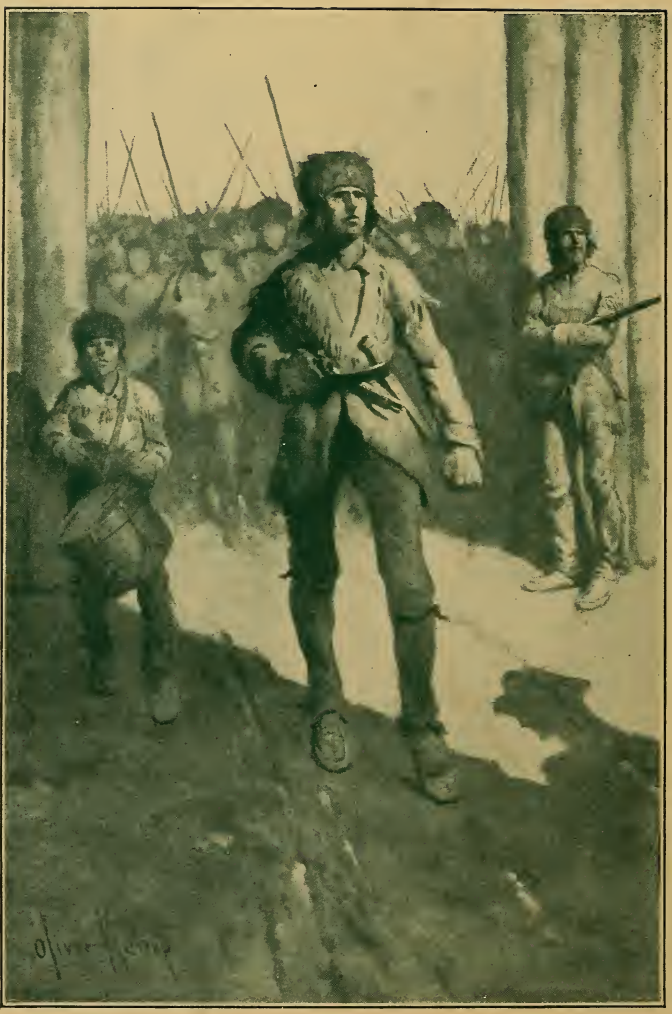

The companies paraded in front of the gate of the fort.
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# *The* TRAIL BLAZERS

## PIONEERS OF THE NORTHWEST

*By*
LAWTON B. EVANS

*Illustrated By*
OLIVER KEMP

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# INTRODUCTION

Among all the romantic episodes of the war of the American Revolution, that of George Rogers Clark and his band of sturdy men from Virginia and Kentucky, stands among the foremost. That two hundred men should overrun a hostile territory larger than France, and hold it for three years, and at the end see it brought under the American flag, reads like a knightly tale of ancient times.

The narrative adheres to the facts so far as the story at large is concerned. All the characters are historical except that of the drummer boy. All the incidents occurred as recorded except a few in the conduct of the Big Gate, the Indian chief. The only liberty taken with the historical account is the personal touch that gives human interest to the story.

The author hopes that no part of the narrative will lessen the regard that Americans now feel for their great allies, the English and the French. Conditions then and now are very different, and readers should not carry the shortcomings of an enemy beyond those times in which they occurred.

That the thrilling story of the conquest of the Northwest Territory, by which five great states and part of another were added to our common union, shall bring a deeper appreciation of the pioneer who carved an empire out of a wilderness, is the great hope of the author of this volume.

LAWTON B. EVANS

# THE TRAIL BLAZERS

## CHAPTER I

### DOWN THE OHIO

IT was May. The long reaches of the Ohio stretched lazily in the young spring as if awakening from a winter sleep. The waves stirred gently in the morning wind, and occasional ripples showed the leaping of fish to an unwary fly. The banks were heavily wooded, with tall trees showing a background of unbroken forest, while bushes of all sorts dipped their branches sleepily into the currents. There was a dignity about the great river, as it silently and solemnly plowed its way into the West, waiting for the traffic that was to crowd its waters a hundred years later.

Now it looked large and lonesome. No villages along the banks, no landings, no farm houses, no blowing of whistles, no call of boatmen, no signs of civilization. Only a great river finding its way through the wilderness to join another great river on its way to the sea.

Around a bend appeared a small boat, then another, and another, until probably a score had lined out in the current of the stream, guided by the strong arms of lusty oarsmen. The men were quiet and bent to their tasks without merriment. They seemed as solemn as the river, and as earnest as the deep wilderness through which the current was bearing them.

They were rough men, born of the frontier, and accustomed to its hardships and perils. They wore the clothing of hunters, a fringed shirt made of buckskin, leggings of buckskin, and moccasins of untanned leather. Their faces were brown with exposure to sun and weather, their hair heavy and matted, and their chins guiltless of any effort to prevent the growth of beard.

The strength of the forest-bred was in their arms, the wariness of the scout in their eyes, the suppleness of wild animals in the movement of their limbs. It was a picked body of men mostly from Virginia, bent on adventure and long accustomed to take care of themselves.

Each man had a long flint-lock rifle, heavy and clumsy, but he had grown used to it, and there was not one of them who could not grab his gun at a moment's notice, raise it to his shoulders standing, and fire on the instant, making sure of his mark at a hundred paces. Many an Indian

had felt their deadly marksmanship, and the red men knew that death followed close behind the blazing of those ungainly weapons.

Some of the men carried scalping-knives, and tomahawks stuck in their belts. As for woodcraft they could teach an Indian tricks that he did not know. There was no chance to lose any of them in the forest, nor would he perish for lack of food even with snow upon the ground. For long they had been accustomed to Indian fighting, and well they had learned the game out of sheer necessity for their lives. In dread of their unfailing aim, and in remembrance of many a long shot that had brought a half-exposed body to the ground, the savages called them "The Long Knives" and the word was enough to carry terror to the farthest settlements of the savages in the northwest country.

In the front boat sat a young man, twenty-six years old, named George Rogers Clark. He was short and stocky, but lithe as a panther, with an eye that his followers feared when it blazed and a voice that called for obedience when it spoke. Evidently he was in command. He was looking ahead, down the current of the stream, and spoke to the man next to him without turning around.

"How many men are in the boats?"

"One hundred and fifty. I counted them

when we went afloat at Red Stone Old Fort," was the reply.

"Warn them not to paddle too fast, for there are some families in the last boats going down the river to live in the new settlements. There are women and children and they must be looked after," said Clark.

"Very well, sir," said the man.

There was but little noise on the river. The men dipped their blades skilfully and silently in the water, lifting them noiselessly to dip them again. There was no talking from boat to boat, no singing, and no movement of body. To one on the shore there came no sound of paddle striking gunwale, or uncomfortable foot changing place. Noise carries far across the water and the men knew that possible danger lurked behind the bushes.

"Any sign of Indians?" asked Clark, in a low voice, of one of his men who was looking intently at the shore.

"I saw a movement in the bushes that looked very like one. Still I am not sure. It is a long ways off," was the answer.

Clark glanced at the shore uneasily, and then looked back at the long line of boats and the men paddling steadily, intent upon their work. He looked at the river ahead of him gleaming broad

and bright in the sun. Then he gazed again at the deep forests on either side and wondered what those dusky shadows held in the way of murderous savages, who might be intent upon the destruction of the little villages and forts that were finding their way into the West. He smiled with deep content when he thought of the men whom he had picked for the voyage, how strong and brave, how trustworthy, more skilled in Indian warfare than the savages themselves, and how deadly their rifles once their target was chosen.

He sat back in the boat and thought of what he was undertaking. His mind wandered over the events of the great war for American liberty, that was being fought with the mother country, of the three years that the war had already lasted, and the end not yet in sight. He smiled as he thought of Burgoyne, and frowned as he thought of Valley Forge. Truly the colonists were having a hard time of it, but they were fighting on their own ground and in a righteous cause, and their enemies were only half-hearted.

He looked ahead as if to see the great northwest territory beyond him, teeming with savages —a land in the grip of the English though peopled largely with French. To one side lay Kentucky, to the other the great territory, the

Ohio dividing them. His thoughts wandered to Detroit where Hamilton, the English Commandant, was deluding the savages with presents, and inciting them to cruelty upon the unprotected frontier settlements of the Americans; of how he would gather the tribes together, and dance with them, and make them promises and fair speeches, and set them on to their murderous work. He wondered in his mind if Hamilton really offered a bounty on the scalps of white men and deserved the name of the "Hair Buyer," as he was called. He shook his head in doubt if any man could be guilty of such atrocious conduct.

"But," said he to himself, "one band of savages after another has crossed this very river looking for scalps of helpless settlers to sell in Detroit, or at least that is the report, and the devils may be on the warpath now. And what happens? Their painted faces appear when least expected, their yells sound in the forest where silence has been for months. The pioneer is shot down in his field, his cattle destroyed, his house burned, his family carried off. Hunters are waylaid and murdered, women going to the spring for water are tomahawked, children playing around the yard are snatched up and carried away. I wonder that anybody dares live in this wilderness." The young leader cast apprehensive eyes

at the deep forest that shadowed the river, and glanced back at the boats that held the fearless families braving the terrors of the frontier.

Then he thought of his own purpose to capture all the country from Hamilton and the British, and his visit to Patrick Henry, governor of Virginia. He remembered that Henry had said to him, "It is a foolish enterprise, and you could not get many to go with you. If you have such an undertaking in mind, you had better keep it to yourself until you are well on your way."

Then he remembered his quarrel with the governor over powder, and over equipment and money, and over other things and how finally he secured one set of papers directing him to protect Kentucky and another authorizing him to drive the British from the northwest territory, if he could.

He smiled when he thought of how those one hundred and fifty men would look when he told them he was not only bent on defending a few forts further down the river, but that he was going to propose to them to conquer a country many times larger than England herself, and hold it for the United Colonies whenever peace came, if it ever should come.

Clark tapped his tightly buttoned jacket and felt the papers concealed in his pocket. "Here

I have my commission as colonel, and my orders to drive the British from their forts. It is a daring thing to do, but I have trusty men with me, and there are others ahead."

The boats drifted on in the sunlight. Noon came and went. The men ate scantily of food already prepared, and guided their boats as they ate. The current was swift in some places, slow in others. The craft kept close together, and in mid-stream, fearing that some savage flotilla would dart from the shore and attack a single boat before the others could come to its rescue. The day wore on and the men bent tirelessly to their work.

Toward the middle of the afternoon, around a bend in the river, the boats came in sight of a small fort almost hidden by the trees. Toward this fort the boats made their way. There was evidently some confusion and things did not look in order. There was evidence of heavy brush being piled up and burned, of the limbs of trees broken off and scattered, and what little grain that had been planted and was starting to grow, trampled by many feet.

The Colonel was wary and checked the boats some distance from the bank. In his mind was the fear that a band of Indians had destroyed another fort and killed all its occupants. He called

aloud two or three times. Then to his relief he saw the gate open and a man appear and run down to the water's edge. It was the Commandant, overjoyed to see the faces of white men.

"What has happened?" asked Clark, as his boats drew up to the landing, "and why all this confusion? I am Colonel Clark and these are my followers. Have the Shawanees been after you again?"

"The Indians have been here for eight days, and we have been in a terrible condition. They left yesterday for the interior and God knows what helpless settlement will fall a prey to their firebrands and tomahawks," said the Commandant, still under the strain and excitement of the siege.

"Were they some of Hamilton's allies, or could you tell?" inquired the Colonel, as he stepped ashore.

"I do not know. We still have our scalps on our heads, but there were times when we doubted if they would stay there long," was the answer.

The men pulled their boats well up on the bank, and fastened them to roots of trees or to the landing itself. There was no room inside the fort for so large a company, and they made themselves a camp outside. Only the women and chil-

dren of the families that accompanied Clark were taken inside the enclosure. Fires were built in the open, the evening meal was cooked, and the men sat around with ill-concealed desire to go after the savages that were on the soil of Kentucky. The soldiers from the fort came and sat with the Long Knives, and according to the custom of the frontier talked in low voices and earnestly.

Clark and the Commandant moved to one side. "Tell me of the attack and the number of Indians and how you defended yourselves," said the Colonel.

"It is a short story, and like all the others," replied the Commandant. "We had not seen Indians for many months, and had fancied the Ohio free of them. One evening the men were scattered, some in the forest, some on the river, some in the fort. I was on the landing looking over the river, when I saw a dozen canoes filled with Indians dart out of the bushes from the other side. I blew the alarm quick and loud and the men came running from the woods, and the boats in the river put in for the banks. It was a race for protection, for the savages were three times our number. The men from the fort held off the savages until the others could get inside, and there were some dead bodies in the river, and

some Indians who would never sound a war cry any more, before the firing ceased."

"What then?" asked Colonel Clark.

"For eight days they hung around. By day they were out of sight, by night they burned the brush, tore limbs from the trees, and trampled the grain. We took toll of their number every now and then when we could get a shot at them. We did not lose a man but we suffered for water. There was no way of going to the spring, or to the river."

"Did they make any determined attack on the fort?"

"Day before yesterday, about daybreak, after we had been watching all night, the woods were full of their yells, and they rushed on the fort in full fury, firing as they came. It seemed that they were determined to take us by storm. Our men leaped to their guns and blazed away. The savages came to the gate and tried to break it down. Some tried to climb the palisade to get inside."

"Did any of them get inside?" asked the Colonel.

"Yes, probably six or seven. Their bodies have gone down the river with the others," replied the Commandant, with a grim smile.

"How long did the attack last?"

"Nearly all day. They would attack and run back to the cover of the woods. Then they would come again. Once we thought the gate was gone when they brought a big log and used it for a battering ram. But I killed the leader and the others ran. At last they gave it up and yesterday with a yell and a few shots we saw them get in their boats and cross the river. Then we flung the dead ones in the water. The others may have gone further down and up some creek to land and on their way to the interior. God help the women and children if they come upon them unawares."

The Commandant tried to persuade Clark to go after the marauders, and capture them before they could do any great damage, but the Colonel shook his head. "There is plenty of work ahead for me and my men. We cannot be diverted from a greater purpose. We must stop all this trouble at the source, and see that their bands cannot come into this country that we are trying to settle. Then I am pledged to look after those families that are going down the river to find homes somewhere. I am in some way their escort. Besides, where could we hunt for a body of Indians in all this wilderness? They vanish in the forest like smoke from a fire. No, we leave

tomorrow and for bigger game," and with that the Commandant had to be content.

Under the stars and by the dying fires the camp slept. The Long Knives knew nothing of the great purpose in the mind of their young Colonel. They wanted to go after Indians anywhere, for they were weary of the cry of the helpless in the deep woods and thirsting to get blood for blood. But they had been given promise of all the adventure they wanted and gone to sleep as tired men will. Only Clark lay awake and watched the river and listened to its long complaint.

Two days were spent at the fort, for the Colonel was in no great hurry. Then the river again, and the long line of boats and the deep shadows of the forest on both sides. No signs of towns and cities that were to come later, when settlers had poured into this region, and staked their fortunes upon villages wherever a landing was favorable. Little did Clark and his men think when they passed the mouth of the Licking River, where the old Indian trail from Detroit crossed the Ohio, and along which many a marauding band had made a foray into Kentucky, that one day the great city of Cincinnati would be built at that place. Now it was all wilderness.

Days passed on the river. In the morning the

rising sun turned the water into a crimson tide, the midday found it glaring with light tempered only by the cool green of the dark forests. Evening fell soft and still, the sun making golden paths into the West. Night found the boats drawn upon shore, fires built, food cooked, and the deep sleep of the healthy and weary. At length the broad expanse of the Kentucky, which was pouring its waters into the Ohio, came into view and a longer camp was made. Then the river again, and on and on, the stream ever widening, the men ever wondering what was the mission upon which they were bent, and the Colonel ever solicitous about the women and the children in the boats at the end of the line.

Some of them began to murmur at getting further away from the scenes of Indian depredations. "We thought we were to land somewhere on these shores along some Indian trail and wait for a band of savages and stop them on their way into Kentucky," they said to Clark one afternoon in camp, "We have been twelve days from home and plenty of places to land and march into Kentucky. Tell us where we are bound and for what?"

"You will have enough chances for fighting, and all the foes you wish to meet," replied the

Colonel. "Have patience, and in a few days I will tell you something that shall stir your blood."

"We will all forget how to shoot if we do not keep in practice," said a hunter. "I have not heard a gun in nearly two weeks," and he looked at his rifle longingly.

The men lay on the ground for the most part, their guns always loaded and ready for action near each hand. They were too wary to leave their weapons unprepared for use at immediate call. Clark glanced at them and saw the restlessness in their eyes. Seizing a large and soft stone which was near his feet, he threw it with all his might into the air and cried, "Shoot!"

The men leaped to their guns. While the stone was on the point of turning for its descent a dozen rifles blazed, and the shattered stone broke into particles that rained like hail upon the ground.

"Good shooting!" said the Colonel. "Pity there were no savage heads for you to put your bullets in."

The others began shooting at will. One hunter took for his target a hawk upon the top limb of a tree, and shot its head off. Another sank a bobbing chip upon the waves of the river. Another shot into an owl hole in a tree three hundred feet away, and remarked, "I wish that hole

was the gun hole of a British fort and behind it was the eye of an Indian."

Finally Clark remarked, "You have wasted enough powder and it will be precious when we face our real enemies. Clean and reload your guns."

Three more days and an island in the river came in view. One end was principally rocks, but the lower end was covered with trees and cane. When the boats came near the island the men could see sycamore and cottonwood trees that ranked with the giant growth of the forest. Here and there were cane brakes from which peeped wild flowers of the brightest colors. The island was known as Corn Island.

Nowadays the beauty of the island has gone. The city of Louisville stands on the Kentucky side, and the once lovely island is now only a pile of rocks and sand that one sees at low water.

Clark could not foresee the coming of the big city, for at that time there was not even a settlement on the mainland. Therefore he chose the island for his resting place, as better protection from the Indians. He also considered that when he told his men what expedition he had in his mind, the island would make it more difficult for any of them to escape if they did not like his enterprise.

Here the Colonel and his men made their camp. It was from this point he intended to set out on his real purpose, and it was his intention later on to tell them what he had in mind. Rude shelters were built out of wood cut from the island and from drift wood that came abundantly down the river, the first cabins being made for the men who had their families along and who already were clamoring for a place to settle.

In a few days a body of troops arrived on the island and threw in their fortunes with Clark. They were men who had come in from Kentucky as wild and free as those who had come down the river. Clark looked them over and ordered them to camp along with his Virginians.

After a few days he called all the men together. They came wondering what he had to say to them. They were an undisciplined lot, knowing nothing of military movements or the art of warfare, save as it applied to Indians. They could march through the forests as silent as a pack of wolves trailing a deer, but they could not march by fours in company order. They came at the Colonel's command, and stood around or sat on the ground as their fancy inclined them.

"Men, I have brought you this far without telling you much of what was in my mind. Now you must know what things I have for you to do.

We are going to fight a greater enemy than Indians, and in a bigger country than Kentucky itself," began the Colonel, as he stood before them.

The men looked at him wonderingly, and a few stirred uneasily. Clark continued, "You know a war is going on between these colonies and England, and this country is fighting for its independence. You know the British are all over Canada and that Hamilton, the Lieutenant-Governor, is at Detroit, and that all the territory beyond the Ohio is in the hands of our enemies. Who is it that excites all these Indians to wage war on our settlements, burn the villages, murder the men, and carry off the women and children? Who is it that furnishes them with guns and ammunition, that promises them many presents, and tells them many falsehoods about the people of Kentucky? Who has sent his soldiers down into this territory, and built forts and deluded the French settlers into making common cause with England?"

The men knew who was in the mind of Clark, and with scowling faces and memories of many tales of bleeding scalps being borne out of Kentucky, and carried to Detroit, they spoke as with one voice, "The Hair Buyer."

"I do not know whether Hamilton is a hair

buyer or not," continued the colonel. "But I do know that he sends the Indians on the warpath, and that many of our friends and some of our kindred have fallen victims to their cruelty. Men, the time has come for us to march into yonder territory, and let the Indians know the Long Knives have also long memories, and a long reach, and that Kentucky is not a place to gather scalps."

The men listened with thoughtful faces. It was not the custom of those born on the frontier, and bred in the forest, to show enthusiasm, for life had been solemn with them from the beginning.

Clark slowly took a paper from his hunting shirt and read them the instruction he had received from Governor Patrick Henry of Virginia. "I have here two sets of papers," said he. "One set is for the public eye and has already been told to you. It is from Governor Henry and authorizes me to raise troops for the defence of Kentucky. That is what you have all thought you were enlisted for, and that is the reason you have been clamoring to be set ashore and go after the marauders upon the soil of yonder state," and Clark waved his hand toward the shores of Kentucky. Then he continued:

"Over there and northward lies the real pur-

pose of my expedition. The way to defend Kentucky is to attack the British in their own territory. Governor Henry has given me this other set of instructions," and here the Colonel held the paper up before the men, "authorizing me to attack the British in Kaskaskia, and to give all who follow me a bounty in land. Now men, you know what is in my mind and what has been there for many months."

The men were quiet with astonishment and looked earnestly at the eager young Colonel as he stood before them glowing with enthusiasm.

"We shall drop down the Ohio from here, land at a convenient place and march overland to the village of Kaskaskia, capture the fort there and raise the American flag. Then we will bid defiance to Hamilton and his crowd, and save all that wonderful country for the United States when this war is over."

The full intent of the great enterprise took hold of the men. They were from Virginia, most of them, and fighting blood was in their veins. One by one they looked across the river as if they could see far off to Detroit and the Lakes. Then their eyes shone with the same light they had seen in the eyes of their Colonel, and a great yell arose from more than a hundred throats. "We are with you, Colonel. The Long Knives are not

Around a bend appeared a small boat, then another, and another.

many in number but every man will count for ten when led by such a man as you. Lead us on to Kaskaskia, or the ends of the earth."

Some of the men were much disappointed. They were not very numerous, however, but they were those who had left their families to go after the Indians and not after the British. They bitterly complained to their Captain that they had been deceived and some of them flatly refused to go further. "We came to fight Indians, here in Kentucky and not the British in the northwest country. While Clark is away off in Kaskaskia, or heaven knows where, the savages will be scalping our wives or killing our children," and nothing the Captain said to them could persuade them to change their minds. They were willing to defend Kentucky, but were not willing to march many hundred miles into British territory.

The next day they applied to Clark for permission to return to their homes. The Colonel declined in prompt and strong language. "The defence of Kentucky need not be on Kentucky soil. I deem it to be on British soil. No, you cannot return to your homes. You go with me."

The men left with sullen faces. Early the next morning before daylight they slipped out of camp, swam across the river to the Kentucky side and disappeared in the forest.

When Clark found that they had deserted him he was furious. Calling a body of his men he ordered them to go at once in pursuit of the fugitives, "and if they resist you shoot them down." The Colonel was a commander who would not stand disobedience, and who loved to see men take any risk and brave any danger.

The detachment started in pursuit. Crossing the river in boats they found the trail of the men, and after traveling twenty miles overtook the deserters. Seeing their pursuers upon them the men scattered in the woods, hiding in the thickets and running through the heavy undergrowth of the forest. Seven were captured, and since they offered no resistance were put under guard and carried back to the island. The others made good their escape.

For days the escaped fugitives made their forlorn way until they came to the little settlement at Harrodsburg. When they reached the fort they were worn and ragged. They told their story outside the gate and the people listened with indignation. "We are on our way back to our homes, and we do not intend to go with Clark into the Northwest. Let the others go if they wish to; we will stay here."

The commander of the fort shut the gate in their faces and would not let them in, "You are

cowards and deserters, and Clark should have captured and shot every one of you, for leaving him. Now begone on your way, for this fort is for brave men only. You do not belong in here."

The others in the fort agreed to what the commander said, and for a long time the fort was closed to the fugitives. At last, however, they were admitted and given food and more clothes, but with surly faces. In a few days they committed themselves to the wilderness trail, suffering great hardships and privations, until they reached their homes.

Clark never forgave them for leaving him, though the men who were captured and brought back did make good soldiers and went with him on his expedition to Kaskaskia.

While Clark was getting his men ready for his expedition and was drilling them daily in the discipline of soldiers, there arrived on the island a boat carrying Captain William Linn and a few soldiers. Captain Linn brought a letter to Colonel Clark telling him of the treaty between the United States and France in which that country agreed to help the United States in their war for independence. This was welcome news to Clark. The treaty had been made in February and Clark had not heard of it before he left on his voyage down the Ohio.

"This means," said he to Linn, "that the French people who live in all the northwest country will be easily changed from their allegiance to England to friendship for America. They are a people loyal to their government and whatever France does you can depend upon the French in America agreeing to."

Daily the drilling of the men continued. Clark knew that severe and hard work was ahead of him, and he would not rest until every man was in condition. Of the Kentuckians who had come from the interior he finally selected twenty or more to add to his Virginians. The men still wore their hunting shirts and leggings, and for shoes there was still nothing better than leather moccasins. But from an undisciplined lot of hunters there emerged in a month a body of well trained soldiers who knew all the rules of war and were ready for any hardship that might be put upon them by their commander.

The families that had come down with his boats were all provided for. Some of the families settled on the island and the nearby mainland, each family having a cabin and a lot of ground around it for a garden. Other families were allowed to go into neighboring settlements in the interior of Kentucky and be absorbed in the ever increasing population of the frontier. For the

protection of those on the island, a small fort was built in which provisions were stored, and which could be used for protection in case the Indians made an attack upon the settlement.

Thus it was in pioneer days that families braved the dangers and discomforts of the wilderness, and that men pushed their fortunes further and further into the great and unknown land that was always towards the setting sun.

## CHAPTER II

### IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORY

THE time had come for Clark and his men to set out on their way to the French village of Kaskaskia, now in the hands of the British. He assembled the men on the island, about one hundred and eighty including the officers, and made them a speech on the enterprise before them, and asked them if they were ready to follow him. They replied with shouts of eagerness, for the spirit of the adventure had at last taken hold of all of them.

All the baggage had been stored in the fort which Clark had built, and a detachment of seven soldiers was left to guard it. Each man carried only his rifle and a supply of ammunition, together with a knife and a tomahawk, and provisions to last him for the trip. There was a river voyage and a long, hard, land march ahead, and the men were equipped Indian fashion.

The boats floated out into the Ohio, the course being up the river for a mile in order to get into the main channel. There they lined out to the

falls of the river which were a short distance below the island. The course had already been made known to the Colonel who was in the lead, and before an hour had passed the boats, one by one, were being tossed in the rapids of the Ohio. The men were skilful boatmen, and in spite of rocks and rushing water the frail crafts were kept safe from crashing into jutting points or being overturned in the swift current.

Now a strange thing happened. The sun began to darken and before the rapids were half passed the light had almost entirely gone out of the heavens. It was a total eclipse of the sun, which Clark had not known of and which terrified some of the men.

Clark could not reassure them for the boats were tossing in the swift current, and the roar of the waters made it impossible for them to hear him. He stood up in his boat and waved his hand and shouted reassuring words the best he could. The men had to keep on for the current bore them downward. If any were frightened there was nothing to do but go on. It took all their time to watch the river and to use the paddles to prevent their boats from getting caught in the rocks or overturned in the current.

Soon they came to deep water and the boats lined out in the middle of the stream. Then the

eclipse began slowly to pass and before long the heavens were again ablaze with the glory of the midday sun.

They spent four days on the river again, with not even rest at night. The men took the paddles by turns, changing every few hours, some sleeping while the others urged the boats forward.

"Are you going down to the Mississippi and paddle up that river to Kaskaskia?" asked one of the men of the Colonel.

"By no means," replied Clark. "The British are smart enough to keep spies all along the river, especially along the Mississippi and if those spies should see so many boats as ours, they would carry the news at once ahead of us. Then there could be no surprise."

"How are we going to reach Kaskaskia then?"

"We are going to land somewhere down the river, and march overland. Through the woods, across the mountains, and over the plains, and it will not be an easy march, for there may be Indians in the way."

The man was silent and Clark gave no more information. Four days and four nights passed and the great mouth of the Tennessee river came into view. Clark knew exactly where he was and decided this was the place to land and prepare for his march. There was an island in the river,

and towards it he directed his own boat, motioning for the others to follow. The men were glad to be ashore again for they had not left the boats in four days, and needed to lay down and stretch their limbs, and walk about. Only a sturdy pioneer could stand such hardships as they were called upon to endure, but the Colonel knew his men and they knew him.

A few hours after landing a boat appeared in the river carrying a body of men, going in the direction from which Clark had come. The Colonel noticed them closely and saw that they were hunters and were bent on passing the island.

"Ho there!" he called, in loud tones. "Come, land, and tell us where you are from and where you are going."

The hunters looked at the men on the island with some distrust and started to turn away. Clark called out again:

"You needn't be afraid, for we are friends, and you needn't try to get away for we can overtake you. Come ashore."

Seeing that it was useless to refuse the invitation the hunters paddled their boat to the island and landed. Clark greeted them in a friendly way and soon discovered that they were Americans and not French as he had at first supposed. The men crowded around the strangers and be-

gan to ask them questions, but Clark fearing that the information might not be what he wanted his men to have, he ordered the hunters to follow him to one side that he might question them.

"Who are you and to what country do you belong, for I must first know whether you are friends or enemies?"

"We are all Americans and over from the states, but we have been a long time in the French country," was the reply.

"Well then, you had better take an oath of allegiance to the United States to satisfy me that you are not spies and in the interest of Hamilton, trying to find out our strength and purpose that you might tell him."

"We are not spies," replied the hunters, with some degree of heat. "Say the words and we will swear."

"Well then, hold up your hands and repeat after me these words." The men held up their hands and the Colonel said:

"We do swear that we belong to the United States, and not to the British; that we are friends of this country and owe allegiance to the American flag; that we are not spies and are not in the interest of Hamilton and his men."

The men repeated the words after the Colonel, and Clark was satisfied, in spite of the fact that

the men were rough enough to be savages themselves. He rather suspected that they were fonder of adventure than of any country, and one flag was as good as another to them. However, he saw he could use them to advantage, and began by asking them where they came from.

"We are from Kaskaskia and have been on the river for eight days. We are hunters and after game. We were not bound anywhere particularly, just going down the Mississippi and up the Ohio—anywhere we like."

"I see," said Clark. "Then perhaps you can tell me something about Kaskaskia and who is in command there."

"The commander is a Frenchman named Rocheblave. Nearly all the people are French," said the leader of the men.

"Have you been in the town lately and do you know much about it?"

"Oh, yes," replied the man. "We have been there a great deal and know all about it."

"Then tell me what you know," ordered the Colonel.

"Well, there is a fort and a body of soldiers, though I do not know how many. We saw them drilling every day we were there. It looked to us as if they were getting ready for an attack of some sort."

"Do they have spies on the river and scouts in the woods?"

"They have spies in boats along the Mississippi, for they expect the Americans to come that way to attack the town. They do not have any scouts in the woods. They think the Indians would give the alarm of any troops coming overland from Kentucky. In fact the Indians and the French wood-rangers have been ordered to be on the lookout for Americans. At least that is what the people told us."

Another one of the hunters spoke up and told the Colonel, "They tell awful tales of the way the Americans treat the people they capture. They say they are worse than the Indians, that they burn the men with hot irons, and scalp them, and tie them up in trees, and torture them, and do all sorts of things to them. As for the women and children they say the Americans just kill them as they go, without mercy."

"Do they say all that?" said Clark. "Well, I am glad to hear they think that for it will make them all the more afraid of us when we get there."

"Are you bound for Kaskaskia?" asked the men, in surprise.

"We are," replied Clark, simply, "and now that I think of it, you may as well go along with us to show us the way. But we shall not go by the

river. We shall go by the land and I think this is a good place to start from."

The men agreed with him quickly, for they were not as yet sure that the rumors of the ferocity of the Americans were false and did not feel equal to any opposition to the desire of the young man standing before them.

"Is there any one of you that knows the way?" inquired Clark. The hunters conferred together for a moment and finally one of them spoke up. "I know the way better than any of the others. My name is Saunders. I have been over the trail once or twice and I can take you there, but it is hard going."

"I don't mind that," was the reply. "How far is it and how long will it take?"

"I don't know how far it is, but we ought to make it in four days."

"Very well. Be sure you tell my men that we can get there without any trouble and that we can take the place if we can surprise it, and no one knows of our coming, and also that the people believe that we are worse than Indians. If you tell them we cannot capture the place and ought not to try, I will do all the things to you you have said the French people at Kaskaskia believe we do."

The hunters swore to tell the men just what

Clark told them to say. They soon were gathered around the camp fire, where the men were cooking their dinner. The hunters told the men marvelous tales of the Northwest, how rich it was in game, how easy it would be to capture the town of Kaskaskia, and how frightened the people were at the stories they had heard.

"They call all Americans the Long Knives, because they can shoot to kill as far as they can see, and never fail to scalp an enemy no matter how long it takes to find him," said the hunters, with serious faces.

At this the men laughed with merriment. They were in great spirits for the first time, for they were sure of success and saw the full glory of the adventure before them.

"We are Long Knives also, and the longest of the knives. We are from Virginia and George Rogers Clark is our Colonel. We are bound for Kaskaskia and when we take that town we may march to Detroit and then all over Canada, if Clark says so."

It was now afternoon and the Colonel had no idea of spending the night on the island. Ordering his men into their boats and taking the hunters along with him he directed his course down the river about ten miles and ran up a little creek to a good landing place. He and his band were

now on Illinois soil and the trail to the northwest country was before him.

One mile down the river was the old Fort Massac, built some twenty odd years before by the French when they occupied the valley of the Ohio. It was put there to counteract the American forts on the upper waters of the Tennessee. But Fort Massac had been abandoned for a number of years and was almost in ruins. Clark did not even give it a thought as he prepared for his march into the interior.

Before him lay a march of more than a hundred and forty miles, but he did not know that it was that far. The country was full of Indians, but for the most part the tribes who lived along the route were not unfriendly. The fear was that a marauding band from farther north would discover the Long Knives and give them trouble or carry word of their approach. But Clark and his sturdy followers lay down on the banks of the creek and slept peacefully all night, not even placing a sentry to keep watch.

In the morning by daybreak the men were up. Provisions for four days were in each man's pack but they were scant provisions for hungry men and a long march. They carried only their guns, their knives, and their hatchets. They had no tents, no camp equipage, no change of cloth-

ing. It was now the latter part of June, the weather was hot, the road was heavy, and the men were in a hurry. They were stripped to bare necessities for their march, but they started cheerfully and with hearts bent on a great purpose.

Clark himself marched at the head of the line, his rifle on his shoulder, his provisions on his back. The men strung out behind him in close order, walking as quietly as possible, and speaking in low tones, for they desired to keep their presence a secret so far as possible. Their way lay through a low, flat region, intersected by numerous streams and abounding in ponds, and covered with a most luxuriant vegetation. There was no trail, for the old Fort Massac trail leading to Kaskaskia had long since been abandoned and in some places had entirely disappeared. The men were traveling northwest led by the hunters who had joined them, who for the most part had to depend upon their instinct for direction.

The first night was spent by the side of a pond in the shelter of a small group of trees. Clark forbade the men to build a fire, knowing the light might attract any prowling band of savages that would be near and that they might sweep down upon them in greater numbers than he cared to encounter. The men ate in discomfort and settled down for the night. Sentries had been posted

who relieved one another every few hours. It was necessary now to exercise great caution. The night passed without incident, and in the morning the men resumed their march.

The going was hard. The men had to wade through ponds and marshes, swim creeks and small rivers and often found themselves floundering in fields of mud. The tall grass cut their hands and impeded their march. The heavy growth of weeds tired their steps. But nothing daunted the courage of the Long Knives. They pushed steadily forward, a brave band bent on the conquest of an empire.

The second day passed as the first. The men were bearing northward, however, and were getting gradually out of the low swampy country and on to level prairie ground.

The morning of the third day saw the men on a prairie, open and wide and free, and almost devoid of trees. They could be seen for several miles and there was no hiding place. The guide insisted that the only way to go was by this route until they reached the hunters' trail through woods further on.

As Clark looked over the wild level country and saw the rich soil under his feet, his prophetic eye caught the vision of waving fields of grain that were to come in the future, of villages spring-

ing up here and there as men moved westward. He murmured to himself, "Some day this land will be full of people and this soil shall help to feed the world."

As it was then, he saw only matted grass through which his tired men were pushing their way, every step made heavy by the luxuriant growth from the rich and yielding soil. Overhead was the blue sky, all around was the air warm with the breath of the coming summer, underneath was the deep green of the prairie grass brightened by the hues of flowers.

Clark traveled in great fear of being discovered by Indians or spies of the British. Calling Saunders, the guide, to him he asked him, "Is there no other way over this country to reach Kaskaskia except by this prairie? Here we are in the wide open and anybody for miles around can see us. Do you know any other route?"

The guide stoutly declared that he knew no other way and the men marched on. In the afternoon Clark called the guide again. "Saunders, this does not look right to me. I believe you are leading me and my men into danger. I believe you have lost your way or else you are a traitor and are taking us into a trap."

The guide was frightened at the stern manner of the Colonel and began to tremble with con-

fusion. He stammered a few words which made Clark suspicious and angry. Then the Colonel blazed forth.

"Tell me, have you lost the way or not? Did you ever know it? Where are you leading us? Speak man, or I shall shoot you dead where you stand."

The guide turned pale with fear. The men who had gathered around called out, "He is a traitor, give him to us." The other hunters who had been with him tried to explain and to pacify the men. The guide grew more and more confused and began to give different answers to the same questions. Clark was never more angry in all his life. Here he was on a prairie, in full view for miles, with Indians probably skulking in the far forests watching him, a band of men who had put their faith in him, and a guide who was ignorant of the trail or else a villain.

Turning to Saunders, he said in loud and angry tones, "If you do not find your way shortly I shall know that you have lied to me and are not a guide but a scoundrel. Tell me at once, do you know where we are and which way we are going?"

The guide was overcome with fear and at last confessed to the Colonel that he had lost the way and was not sure of the direction. "Give me

time to find out, and let me look around. Perhaps I may recover the trail. We can't be very far wrong, anyway," said the fellow, almost ready to fall on his knees before the angry Colonel.

Clark had calmed down somewhat, and spoke to the guide in a slow and determined manner. "I shall give you two hours to find the way you confess you have lost. If you do not pick up the trail by that time you shall be shot. You can go where you like to look over the ground, but I shall see that some of my men go along with you."

The guide withdrew. The men had halted on the prairie which bore no trace of trail or mark of direction. They knew in a general way that Kaskaskia was to the northwest, but that knowledge was of no more service than a general direction would be to a vessel at sea. Up to this time the guide had kept to what appeared a certain knowledge of streams and land, but now the party was lost on the prairies of the Northwest, miles from their destination and their only hope was in this guide. Clark would probably have led them another way had not this fellow been so sure of the direction.

Saunders begged to be allowed to go in search of a road which he thought was off to the right

somewhere. Three men went with him to see that he did not try to escape.

The party struck across the prairie, the guide stopping every now and then to look at the ground and at the clumps of trees that broke the monotony of the landscape. After an hour of walking and watching, Saunders and his companions came to a small hill that rose over the plain from which a fairly good view could be obtained. The sun was half way in the heavens and it was evidently midday. The guide stood up with his back to the sun and his shadow directly in front of him.

"That way is north," said he, pointing along the line of his shadow. "We have been coming north for nearly three days and have been about fifty miles. Kaskaskia should lie in that direction."

Saunders saw in the distance a tree larger than usual, that was standing alone on the prairie, and towards that tree he directed his party. Upon approaching it, the men saw signs of a camp fire though the ashes were old.

"Somebody has been along this path before," remarked one of the men, "and they were not Indians either, for an Indian always buries his fire."

"Hunters or traders, I do not know which,"

said Saunders, attentively examining the tree and the dead ashes. After awhile he remarked,

"Traders with the Indians, I should say and going north."

"How do you know?"

"If they were going to the tribes to trade they would have heavy packs which they would have hung by breaking branches on the tree. There were no signs of broken branches anywhere. Therefore the packs were empty and used for pillows. The traders were going home, and those around here come from Kaskaskia or Vincennes. We are not far from the hunters' trail. Our way lies over yonder."

The men looked carefully at the horizon and saw a rise in the ground covered with undergrowth and a few trees. They determined to keep their eyes on that landmark and use it for a sign of direction and if suitable, for a place to camp, for they had lost some time with the guide already.

Upon returning to Clark they found him impatient and in no very good humor. "Well, what have you found, and are you ready to go on, or shall I do as I threatened if you have lost your way," he demanded of the guide.

"The way is not lost. I was bewildered for awhile, but a guide is never completely lost so

long as he looks at the sun and the stars and keeps going in one direction," was the reply.

Clark was pacified, and according to his nature dismissed the matter from his mind, believing now that the guide was really bewildered and was not intending the party any harm.

By sundown they reached the hill and the clump of trees and there the party camped for the night. They built no fires, but lay down on the ground, for Clark was not sure whether there were Indians in the way or not.

The end of the fourth day found them out of the prairie and in the woods. For this they were thankful, for the going was better and the sun was not so distressing. Overhead were the tall timbers of a virgin forest that some day were to bring riches to a prosperous people. Underneath was a soft carpet of rotting leaves that made the soil inexpressibly fertile.

"Tomorrow we should be in sight of Kaskaskia," said he to Captain Bowman, in charge of one of his companies.

"It would be well for us to get there early, for by tomorrow morning or by noon at furthest our men will have eaten the last of their provisions, and by night there will be no food," replied the Captain.

"The guide said it was four days' march, and

we have already gone four days. We should be near the end of our journey," remarked the Colonel, with some anxiety. He did not know that he was yet two days hard traveling from the village he had as his object.

The fifth day found the men going without food. They had eaten the last of their rations for their morning meal but were in high spirits thinking they would feast in Kaskaskia that night. On they went, crossing streams, wading through swamps of underbrush and cutting their way through bushes and briers whenever they came to such obstructions.

By midday they struck the hunters' trail leading to the settlements of the French in the interior. The trail was dim, and in some places marked only by a blaze on the trees cut with a knife or burned into the wood by a hot iron. Still it was a trail and was leading them on to their destination. And so the day passed, the men marching in silence, Clark still in the lead with his rifle on his shoulder, and Captain Bowman by his side.

The sixth day began, the men were more hungry than ever, and trying to content themselves with what berries they could find in the bushes by the trail. Still they did not complain, for they were not of the sort to complain. Men

who start out on a great enterprise must endure hardship, and must do without. It was no holiday excursion and no pleasure trip, but a serious undertaking, so the men suffered and said nothing.

The afternoon of the sixth day came, and the men emerged from the forest quietly, and with the least possible noise. Before them was a wide and beautiful river. On the opposite side was a village, with a church spire rising conspicuously in view.

Saunders stood by Clark and said in low tones, "That is Kaskaskia where I promised to lead you."

"Why have they no spies or scouts in all these woods and along these trails to warn the commander? Does he not fear an attack from the enemy?"

"Yes, but he does not look for them from these woods. He does not believe any force of men could cross this country in such size as to give him trouble. He has plenty of boats on the river and his spies are scattered for miles along the Mississippi. It is well you did not take your men by water."

The men sat down in the shadows of the forest hidden from view of those on the other side of the Kaskaskia River. A little way up stream and

on the same side as Clark's men were the ruins of an old fort built by the French and destroyed by fire twelve years before Clark's arrival. It was now abandoned and only the remains of charred walls could be seen. Clark paid no attention to it, for he knew that the fort that held the commanding officer was on the other side of the river.

The village at which Clark and his men looked with longing eyes was not a very large one—probably four hundred people lived there, mostly French. It was named for a tribe of Indians that lived along the river, the most considerable tribe in Illinois. About forty years before the time of our narrative the Jesuits had gotten possession of this land and had built a school and church where the village was. The buildings were of stone and made a good appearance. But the order of Jesuits had been suppressed and their property confiscated by the French government. So, for the last fifteen years the stone school building had become a fort, named Fort Gage and in that fort lived Colonel Rocheblave and his men, for the defence of the town.

The fort was in a poor condition. The roof leaked badly and only a dilapidated picket fence offered any resistance to those who should attack it. In the village there were two French com-

panies organized and drilled and ready to march at a moment's notice. There were more soldiers than Clark had but they were not fighting for their country, and while all the Frenchmen of the western frontier had knowledge of wood craft, still they were not marksmen such as the Long Knives, and had not that spirit of adventure that burned in the breasts of these hardy sons of the forest and trail.

Darkness drew on and the shadows deepened. The river was still. The lights of the village began to twinkle through the evening dusk, and their reflections to quiver in the water. Clark and his men remained quiet until it was quite dark wondering how they could get across the river and into the town.

The men were famishing with hunger and eagerly thought of the food that was in reach if they could only get to it. As they sat in the gathering gloom the low growl of a dog greeted the ears of Captain Helm in charge of one of the companies of Clark's men. Helm was fond of dogs and called the animal to him by a gentle whistle and patted him on the head.

"What do you make of this, Captain?" asked one of his men.

Helm thought awhile, and replied, "I take it

to mean that where there is a dog there is a man, and also a house."

Feeling the dog's back, he continued, "This dog lives on this side of the river, for he is not wet with swimming, and he is too fat to be a stray. I think his home is not far from here and that it is on this side of the Kaskaskia."

Captain Helm patted the dog and rose to find Clark. The dog followed him. Reaching the Colonel, Helm showed him the animal and told him what he thought of a house not far away.

"Helm, you are right," was Clark's quick decision. "Do you take the lead and follow the dog and the rest of us will come behind. If we find a house we may find food and we may find boats. At any rate we cannot swim this river and capture a town with wet clothes and wet powder. We must have boats and plenty of them."

Helm played with the dog and made friends with him while the men rose and prepared for the march. The dog ran on in front and started up the river along a little path that ran by the side of the woods. The Captain followed on foot as fast as he could and called him every now and then to stop so that the men could keep up. It was so dark by now that it was hard to see the dog or even to see the way along the path.

At last in a bend of the river and almost hidden by the sloping banks and the heavy growth there came into dim view a house, through whose windows there gleamed the light of a candle. The dog evidently was at home and ran forward barking, as if he had to lead his new friends to his house.

Helm pressed on, now that he saw the house, with the hope of finding means to cross the river and probably a little food for their men. The dog barked at the door, the Captain close behind him. The door was cautiously opened about twelve inches and a man's voice speaking in French called the dog to come in. The dog ran in, but when the owner of the house tried to close the door he found himself confronted by the burly form of a stranger who spoke to him in English with words, courteous but firm:

"Not so fast, my friend. I and a few others wish to speak with you, and it is better to leave the door open than it is to have us break it down. You are one family and we are many men, but we will do you no harm."

The Frenchman was thoroughly frightened. He blurted out in broken English a few words and tried to close the door, but Helm had dropped a rifle barrel on the jamb, so that the door would not close. By this time Clark and a few others

had arrived, while most of the men had gone down to the river side to see if they could discover any boats. Clark promptly pushed the door open and strode in accompanied by Helm and a half dozen men.

Once inside they saw a room, in the center of which was a table with a single candle on it. Evidently the family had taken their evening meal for the plates were still there, and the dog was now eagerly devouring what scraps had been set aside for him. To one side sat a woman in whose face was depicted terror of the ferocious appearance of Clark and his men. Around her clung three or four frightened children. The appearance of Clark and Helm and the frontiersmen with them was enough to frighten any one. For six days they had marched through a wilderness, their clothes were torn, their hair was matted. They were tired and hungry. By the light of day they would have looked ferocious. What must have been their aspect when a dim candle threw their faces into uncertain relief and their great shadows on the walls?

"Who are you, and what do you want?" asked the Frenchman.

"We are Americans and we have come to take Kaskaskia," was the reply.

The Frenchman looked at them with astonished and fearful eyes.

"How did you get here, and how many are you?" he gasped.

"We marched here from Ohio and there are plenty of others in the yard. Do you know what they call us in this territory?"

"The Long Knives! The Long Knives!" said the man, almost in a whisper, and turned to grasp some weapon to defend his family from what he thought was instant and cruel death. He would rather have seen painted savages in his house than the dreaded Americans of whose cruelty he had heard such fearful stories.

"Yes, we are the Long Knives, but you need not fear us so long as you tell us the truth and do as I bid you."

The men sat down and Clark, seeing the fireplace full of brush, ordered one of his men to light it. Soon a fire was blazing and the room was lighted sufficiently for the men to see that after all they had not come upon a destitute family, but rather a fairly well to do farmer.

"Now, sir," began Clark, as he sat down and motioned the farmer to do likewise. "Tell me if you have any boats at your landing and how many, for I have a lot of men that I intend to carry across the river."

The farmer replied in broken English which we will not attempt to imitate. What he tried to say to Clark was:

"I have a number of boats, some large and some small. They are all at the landing down by the river. Sometimes I act as ferryman for parties who wish to cross here. But, sir, you have not told me your name and what you will do with the people of Kaskaskia."

"Never mind what I shall do. It will be time enough to decide that question when I am across the river and in possession of the town."

"Surely you will not murder me and my family, and kill all the people in the village. I have heard that The Long Knives are worse than the Indians."

"I have never murdered anybody yet, nor has any of my men. We have taken a few savages every now and then, but no white men and no women."

"We heard differently," said the farmer, still in doubt.

"Tell me if the people of Kaskaskia know anything of our approach," demanded the Colonel.

"I was in the village this morning, and saw the French companies drilling, but I did not hear that an enemy was nearby."

"Did no one bring word that The Long Knives were on the march?"

"I did hear that a hunter came into the town about two weeks ago and said that he saw an Indian who told him that many boat-loads of white men were coming down the Ohio. But the Commander thought they were going into the Kentucky settlements."

"That may have been the Indian we saw on the river," said Clark. After a moment he inquired:

"Are there many people in Kaskaskia now?"

"Yes, this is the time of the year when the people are at their homes in the village. In fact they have a dance in the big hall there nearly every night. I was at the hall last night. Some of the soldiers go to the dance. They are having a good time, and have no idea that American soldiers are within a hundred miles of them."

"How about the Indians?" asked Helm, for he wanted to know what enemies he would have to face.

"Last week there was a big pow-wow and a lot of Shawanees rode into the village. The Commander gave them presents and made them a speech, and sent them off. Nearly all have gone by now. There may be a few left."

"Did you hear that Hamilton at Detroit offers

to pay for the scalps of white men, and buys them from the Indians, and that he is called the 'Hair Buyer'?"

"Yes, I have heard that, but I did not hear that our Commander said anything about it to the Indians."

"Is the Commander named Rocheblave?"

"Yes, that is his name. He lives with his wife in the fort."

"How many has he in his fort?"

"Not many. I understand not more than twenty. They told me the fort itself is in bad condition, and that Rocheblave has asked for it to be repaired and for more troops to be sent out here. But so far nothing has been done and there are only two companies of soldiers."

All the conversation was conducted with infinite pains and much repetition, for the Frenchman knew very little English and Clark knew very little, if any, French. Still they understood each other.

There was no more to be gained from the farmer, and Clark left him and his family and went down to the landing where the men were waiting for him. He saw there were a number of flat-bottomed boats, but by no means enough to carry over his entire party at one trip. He ordered Captain Helm to take his men over in

the first boat and send the boats back for the others. In this way he expected to get all the men over in a short time.

The night was dark, the river was free of boats, and the men moved quickly and silently. They knew that dividing the force was dangerous if they were discovered, for those left behind could not aid those who had reached the other side. Helm got his company of fifty or sixty men in the largest boats and they bent to the oars without making the least sound. The river was not wide, nor was the current strong. The men were accustomed to water and boats and in a short while Helm had his division across and safely landed on the village side some distance above the village itself.

Once landed the men crouched close to the bank and kept silent, waiting for the others. Two men took each boat back and another load was brought over. Bowman's company was next and finally the division under Captain Harrod. Clark went over with the last of the men, after giving a parting word to the farmer not to give the slightest alarm under penalty of death. To insure this he left two men as a guard with instructions for them to come over to the village in the morning for by that time he expected to have the village in his power. In this way the whole force reached

the village side of the river without being discovered.

Clark went among the men as they crouched upon the banks above the village and hidden by the bushes, and told them they had come to the end of their march and that upon their courage depended their lives and the success of the expedition.

## CHAPTER III

### THE CAPTURE OF KASKASKIA

COLONEL Clark and his little army were now on the Kaskaskia side of the river. They were concealed by the undergrowth along the banks, their presence was unsuspected, and the village which lay a short distance down the river was preparing to give itself over to the festivities that generally ended the day in French settlements. Clark looked his men over, and saw that all were there and in good order in spite of their hunger and weariness.

He decided to let the men rest awhile, and went with Bowman and Harrod to reconnoitre the path down the river. The night was dark and the way was unfamiliar. The lights of the village shone faintly before them and the path became more and more open. It was quite evident that the approach to the place was before them and all that was necessary was to get the men together and begin the march.

As the three turned to retrace their way they heard the footsteps of a man behind them going

in the direction of Kaskaskia. Clark and his party stood still and let the man come on. When he was in a few paces of them Clark confronted him with the order to halt. The man in great astonishment stopped and dropped a bag which he held in his hand.

"Who are you and where are you going?" demanded the Colonel.

The man could not see in the darkness who was before him and how many. He broke into a mixture of French and English which Clark could scarcely understand. The man was evidently frightened, and begged to be allowed to go on his way.

"Where do you come from?" asked Clark.

"Kaskaskia yonder," was the reply, in broken English.

"What are you doing here and what is in that bag?"

"I'm a hunter. This bag has birds and rabbits for my family."

Bowman picked up the bag and emptied its contents on the ground; feeling for the game with his hands, he remarked,

"What he says is true. I wish it were cooked and that we might eat it, for I am hungry enough to eat the hunter himself."

The Frenchman, for he was of that nation,

did not understand the humor of Bowman's words and took him literally. Throwing down his gun he held up his hands and broke into a loud cry of terror.

"Shut up, you fool," said Clark, grasping him by the throat. "Do you want to bring the town out here? We are not going to eat you nor hurt you if you do as I say. We are the Long Knives, and if you make another sound I shall stick my knife in you and drop your body in the river."

The hunter clapped his hands over his mouth to smother an exclamation. He had heard of the Long Knives and believed in their cruelty. How in the world he had fallen into their hands he did not take time to question. He was ready and willing to do the bidding of the three men who stood before him in such a menacing manner.

"Pick up your gun and come with me," ordered Clark.

The man obeyed and the three returned to the place where the others were still awaiting orders. On the way Clark, Bowman and Harrod questioned the hunter closely about the town and the fort and gathered information from him that helped the leader in maturing their plans.

On reaching the main body, Clark ordered the men to rise and fall in according to com-

panies. He then gave directions that the two companies under Captain Harrod and Captain Helm should surround the town and see that no one of the inhabitants escaped. He then ordered the company of Captain Bowman to go with him to capture Fort Gage, in which was the Commander, Rocheblave, and a small detachment of soldiers. The captured hunter was taken along as a guide.

It was now nearly midnight. The men were ordered forward and the march toward the village was begun silently and in perfect order.

The village itself was compactly built, the few streets running crosswise to one another, the houses hardly more than cabins, and the heavy forest growth reaching up to the town itself. It did not take long for the two companies under Harrod and Helm to dispose of themselves along the ends of the streets and in the woods in such a way that the town itself was under the eyes of the men, and the size of their force could not be discovered.

All the houses were dark, the inhabitants being either asleep or gathered in the large guard hall of the fort, which was the place where the people assembled for their merry-making. The only lights that any one could see were in the fort itself and in the hall from which there came the

sound of music and dancing. Evidently the people slept or made merry in utter unconsciousness that their town was surrounded by an enemy and that the fort itself was in danger.

Waiting until he was sure that the companies had time to silently surround the town, Clark and Bowman took up their own march toward the fort.

Turning toward the captured guide, Clark demanded, "Where is the rear gate of this fort, and is it the weakest one?"

The guide replied promptly, "The postern gate is on the river side. I do not know anything else."

Avoiding the front of the fort and the guard hall which he saw was filled with people, Clark directed his men around to the rear and in the shadows of trees that grew along the banks of the river. Reaching the point designated by the guide he ordered the company to halt. Calling Bowman and about twenty men to one side, as well as an old hunter and scout who had been with him on the march, by the name of Simon Kenton, he quietly gave orders.

"Bowman, I want you and Kenton and these men to go with me to attack the gate and seize the fort. The others can wait outside in case any soldiers from the town hear us."

The men fell back and Clark and his party approached the gate. Hardly had they stepped outside the shadows and started on their way to the gate when a sentry accosted them. "Who goes there?"

"We are friends," replied Kenton quickly aloud, "and would like to have a word with you."

Before the sentry could reply, Kenton leaped forward and bore him to the ground. The sentry's gun fell undischarged, and the strong grip of the scout had him by the throat.

"Hist, now, and be still. It's Simon Kenton that's got you by the throat, and if you make a sound I'll choke you to death."

The scout relaxed his grip but still held the sentry at his mercy. The man was taken so completely by surprise that he made no movement and uttered no sound. Holding his hand at the sentry's throat and with the other grasping him by the hand, he demanded in a whisper:

"Where's the Commander of this fort and what's he doing now?"

The sentry could speak some English, as nearly all the French could, and replied, "The Governor is asleep in his own room. His wife is with him. What do you want to know for?"

"That's our business," replied Kenton. "You had best keep still or I'll fix you so that you will

always be still." The sentry caught his meaning easily and shivered when he felt the great muscles of the scout's hand around his neck.

The sentry willingly pointed out the room of the Commander, or Governor as he was often called, which was in darkness. Clark and the others looked at it from beyond the gate and saw that it was at the other end of the long, low, stone building from the hall where there was a light and the noise of music.

"Take this sentry back to the men yonder and tell them to guard him well, along with that hunter we captured. If they get away and make an alarm, it might go very ill with us."

Several of the men took the sentry back to the company stationed on the river bank and gave them the orders of the Colonel. They then returned to their places where Clark and the others were examining the gate.

"If we beat it down we will make too much noise and some of the soldiers will arouse the Governor. We want to capture him before he can give any orders," said Bowman.

Kenton examined the gate in the darkness the best he could and pushing his hand through a crack in the broken wood discovered it was held by a chain that he could not loosen from its fastening.

"Here, you young fellow," said he, turning to a small but wiry young soldier who was still a mere boy. "Come here, and let me heave you over the gate. You can unhook it from the inside. Come now, let me give you a lift."

The boy came forward briskly. He was young, strong, and brave. The scout took him on his shoulders, then lifted him to the top of the gate, from where he dropped light as a cat to the other side. In a few minutes the chain was unhooked from its place and fell to the ground, and those outside pushed the gate open. Clark, Bowman, Kenton and the others came in quietly, stopping a moment to find out if any noise they had made had excited any surprise.

All was still, the fort was dark, and no soldiers or sentries were in sight. From the gate to the door of the fort was but a few rods and these the men quickly passed over. The door of the fort was open. There were no sentries on guard. It was evident that the soldiers of the fort were asleep or else were attending the dance going on in the guard hall. The progress of Clark and his men was not impeded. There was a dim light burning in the entry, hardly enough to light one's way, but it was enough to show the direction to the door of the sleeping apartment set aside for

the Governor and his family. Kenton was in the lead, the others close behind him.

Reaching the door which they were sure was the one occupied by Rocheblave, Kenton pushed against it. It opened without resistance and the scout entered followed by Clark and Bowman and a few of the others. So softly had the party entered the apartment that neither the Commander nor his wife were aroused. They were sleeping quietly side by side, the room lighted dimly in the same way as the entry through which the men had come.

The scout stepped forward and touched the sleeping Governor on the shoulder. He awoke with a start and sat up in his bed. Before him were a half dozen rough men, ragged and worn with marching, faces heavily bearded and hair grown long after an absence of many weeks from civilization. In the faint light they were enough to frighten a braver heart than that of the French Commander. He knew they were not his soldiers, nor were they Indians, nor did they belong to the people of Kaskaskia. In the bewilderment of sudden awaking from sleep he called out:

"What does this mean and who are you?"

At the same instant his wife awoke and was about to scream at the sight which met her eyes.

She thought they both would be murdered in their beds. But a soldier grabbed her by the shoulder and put his hand over her mouth. "Hush, woman, or I shall have to choke you. Hold your peace, if you value your life." The woman kept still, but looked on with terror in her eyes.

Kenton was the first to speak. Disregarding the woman he turned to the officer. "We are Virginians, sometimes called Long Knives, and you are our prisoners," said he, quietly.

Rocheblave leaped out of bed at these words and confronted Clark, who stepped forward to meet him, his fur cap in his hand. Making a bow Clark said, "Sir, I am George Rogers Clark, a Colonel in the service of Virginia and the Continental Army. My men are outside the fort and have surrounded your town. I demand an instant and unconditional surrender of Kaskaskia, this fort, and all the people."

"Never! Never!" cried the distressed Commander. "You are not from Virginia. You are robbers and thieves. I shall not surrender to such a crew as you. Call the guard."

Bowman had closed the door, and stationed a heavy guard outside in case any soldier should appear. The noise of the merry-making in the guard hall was loud enough to drown any

sounds that had been made in the Commander's room. Clark spoke as quietly as before:

"We are from Virginia, and are what you call Long Knives. We have marched overland to this place and have eluded all your spies and escaped your Indian allies. We have enough men to compel your surrender. Unless you surrender at once, yourself, we shall treat you as an enemy, tie you hand and foot, and take you out of this fort and give you to our men as a prisoner of war. We shall otherwise do you no harm for we are not savages. If you surrender now, we will take your parole and let you remain here."

"Clark! Clark!" repeated Rocheblave. "I never heard of George Rogers Clark. You are but a boy. I have heard of other Americans but not of you. By what right do you demand my surrender?"

"In the name of Patrick Henry, governor of Virginia, and the Continental Army. But we are wasting time. Decide now, or I shall decide for you," replied the Colonel, in firm but respectful tones.

"Have it your way," said the Governor, sullenly. "But as you have no army behind you and cannot enforce this surrender, you had best look out for your own safety. I have soldiers under my command."

Saying this the Governor began slowly to put on his clothes, for he knew that the night was to be full of incident.

In the meantime his wife sat with glaring eyes, gazing at the intruders upon her privacy. She had not tried to make any sound since her first scream had been silenced by a rude hand upon her mouth but had listened with alarm in her face to all that had been said. She looked at her husband, then at Clark and the officers, then at the scout, and finally at the rough faces of the soldiers. When she heard Clark say they were Long Knives she shuddered, thinking of the awful deeds of which they were accused. But when she saw the gentlemanly bearing of the Colonel, and listened to the accents of his voice, her alarm gradually subsided, and her fears gave way to other emergencies of war.

In the corner of the dimly lighted room was a chest, which was used in part by the Governor as repository for important papers. It was locked and the key was kept in the Governor's possession. Clark had not noticed the chest, and, of course, knew nothing of its contents. Madame Rocheblave, however, thought of the documents and letters in it, and slipping on a light covering she glided out of bed and sat on the chest, as if to guard its secrets from those

who had just made prisoners of herself and her husband.

"Madame, why do you sit there, and why that defiance in your face? I think that chest must contain something of value. I beg you to leave your seat and let my men open the box that I may see what it contains," said Clark.

"No! No!" cried Madame Rocheblave, in great distress. "This chest holds something of mine. They are of no value to you. I shall not move from here."

Clark knit his brow in perplexity. He was determined to find out what the box contained, but he did not wish forcibly to dislodge the woman from her seat. He tried to persuade her to let him see inside, but she shook her head violently and threatened to scream aloud if he came near her.

"I do not wish to harm a lady, especially the wife of so fine an officer as M. Rocheblave, but Madame, I am resolved to see inside that box. If there are only some things that belong to you they shall not be disturbed."

The woman cried again, "No! No! Go away. You cannot see inside here. I shall not let you. If you come near me I shall scream and the soldiers will fill this room and kill you all."

Clark was not afraid of any such event, for his men were posted outside and any noise would bring them to him in an instant. There were probably fifty of them just beyond the gate and their aim was very deadly. Therefore, he smiled and said again:

"Madame, I have enough soldiers to take care of me, and to take possession of Kaskaskia. Your husband has surrendered, and I advise you to submit before I am compelled to order my men to take you forcibly from your place."

Her husband now intervened to prevent an indignity to his wife. He knew by Clark's manner that he would order his men to seize her if it became necessary and then the chest would be in his possession. Therefore he said, "We are prisoners, and you may as well let him have his way in this also. He will throw you off and get the chest anyhow."

The woman took a seat in a chair, leaving the box to Clark. Ordering one of his men to open it, he watched him break the lock with his heavy hunting knife and throw back the lid. Putting his hand inside he found a quantity of woman's clothes and trinkets, which he removed and placed on the floor. In the bottom of the box, however, there was a portfolio filled with papers.

"Ah, these may be of value to me. I shall

keep them to see what advice they contain. Madame, the clothes are yours as you said, but I find that the box contains other things also," said Clark, as he ordered the men to replace the clothes and close the lid of the chest.

It was several days before Clark had time to read the letters in the portfolio. When he did get to them he found the correspondence between Rocheblave and Hamilton at Detroit. Rocheblave was complaining of the defenceless state of Kaskaskia, asking for the fort to be repaired, asking for more troops, and telling of the danger of capture from a force of Americans. Hamilton's letters were telling him to rely on the Indians and to stimulate them to all the hostility he could, advising him to make them presents and to send them out to harm the settlements along the Kentucky border, and to do all the damage they could.

"The beast," said Clark, to himself, when he read the deadly purpose of the instructions. "Does he not know what Indian warfare means? Does not he know that Indians burn and torture and scalp, and that they spare neither young nor old? I wonder what manner of man he is that could write such letters?"

But at the moment he secured the portfolio, there was no time for reading what it contained.

He handed the package to Bowman with instructions to keep it until he called for it.

Leaving the Governor and his wife prisoners under guard of a few soldiers, Clark, Bowman and Kenton went outside and rejoined the men whom he had left outside the fort. It was now long past midnight, but the music was still coming from the guard hall at the other end of the fort.

"Don't these people ever sleep?" said Clark.

"Probably they dance all night and sleep all day," replied Bowman. "Would you like to join them?"

"Yes, with a detachment of our men," was the answer. "We will give them some entertainment they were not expecting."

Calling the soldiers to follow him, he boldly made his way in the darkness around to the lighted hall. Here the officers were giving a ball, and the fun loving French, young and old, were reveling and dancing and laughing, while the musicians played merry tunes. The sentinels had left their posts.

"No wonder they did not hear us capture the Governor and his wife. They are making so much noise they could not hear a gunshot," remarked Bowman.

Clark posted his men around the door and at

the windows and told them not to fire under any circumstances, but to keep the people in the hall. He then advanced alone to the main door, stood awhile in the entrance and then leaned against a post, watching the dance with a smile of amusement on his face. He must have presented an odd contrast to the light built French with their well kept appearance. Though young and strong he had the rough wear of months upon his clothes, and his brown skin and tangled hair showed the hardship through which he had just passed. For awhile he was unnoticed, or else those who saw him thought him to be some hunter returned from the woods.

An Indian lay on the floor a few feet from the calm observer of the festivity. The savage had keen eyes and had been on the warpath as far as Kentucky and knew the difference between the appearance of the hunters around Kaskaskia and those from beyond the Ohio. He stirred uneasily and rose to his feet regarding Clark intently. The Colonel looked at him squarely in the eye for a moment. The Indian knew he was no neighbor, nor friend, but that he was from beyond the border, and was at the fort for no good purpose.

Leaping to his feet the savage gave a yell that sounded the war cry through the rafters

of the building. Then another and another. The music ceased, the women screamed, and the soldiers made a rush for the door. All was confusion and noise. The merriment was over, and in its place were panic and fear. When the soldiers saw Clark at the door, smiling serenely and confidently, they also knew where he had come from, and surmised what force he had brought with him. With one voice they exclaimed, "Long Knives! Long Knives!"

All was still as death, for the fear of the Americans was in every mind. What force did this quiet young man in the torn and muddy hunting clothes, and wearing a fur cap, have behind him? Who was he anyhow? Should they take him and throw him out, or should they acknowledge themselves surprised and overcome? The officers hesitated. They were unarmed, not even their swords were by their sides. The sentries likewise had no arms. Clark was at the door and in his hand was a long rifle that meant death to the first man that showed resistance. In the darkness behind him there were probably other men similarly armed.

The women clung to the men, sobbing with fear. The quiet manner of the frontiersman leaning against the door post and his confident smile filled them with consternation. When

they heard the men say, "Long Knives," their minds recalled the stories of capture and torture and death that the British had circulated among the people of the Northwest in order to incite them to greater hostility. To the terrified women in the guard hall their presence was worse than that of Pontiac and his murderous band of followers.

Clark now stepped forward and held up his hand. All eyes were turned upon him, and the silence was intense. His face assumed a resolute, but not a fierce expression. He spoke slowly so that they all could hear and understand him.

"I am George Rogers Clark, Colonel in the service of Virginia and the Continental Army. With me is a force of Americans large enough to capture and hold Kaskaskia. My men are outside and have surrounded your town. We are what you call Long Knives. We have come a long way; we can shoot far and kill quick. You are now my prisoners. You may go on with your dancing, but you are dancing under the American flag and not under the flag of England."

The effect of those words can well be imagined. The officers saw they were trapped, and swore violently, but not in loud tones. The women were cowed and fearful. There was no

movement on the part of anyone to take the suggestion of the American.

One of the officers spoke up and inquired in a half-insolent way, "Will you and your Long Knives slay us all here or will you wait until we go to our homes?"

"I said you might go on with your dancing," was the reply.

But there was no intention of going on with the dancing. All merriment had died out of the hearts of the merrymakers. They could not dance with death staring them in the face. The company huddled together in the middle of the hall, while Clark spoke to them again.

"I may as well let you know that the Governor and his wife are prisoners in the hands of my men. We have just taken him in his bed, and he is now under guard of some of my men. He has surrendered to me the fort, this town, and all the people in it. I shall expect the rest of you to do likewise."

The crowd was silent. Clark stepped to the door and called his men who were waiting outside. In they marched, Bowman and Kenton at their head. They were worse looking than Clark himself and their appearance was by no means reassuring. They separated into two

files, each man having his rifle in his hand, his knife in his belt.

"Now, my friends, you see I have soldiers with me. They will do as I say. If you wish to dance any more tonight you may go on, and these men will not disturb you. If you wish to go to your homes you may do so," said the Colonel, turning to the company, who had watched the coming of the soldiers with increasing alarm.

The people slowly gathered their belongings and prepared to depart. They spoke not a word, but marched between the files of Clark's men and were soon in the streets, and on their way to their homes. Clark put out the lights in the guard hall and told his soldiers to follow him.

Knowing that the dancers would soon give out the news that the Long Knives had arrived, and that the town would be aroused, Clark knew that he should quickly assemble all his force to terrify the people. Therefore he ordered all his detachment to shout as loud as they could in order to call together those who had surrounded the village.

From fifty lusty throats there resounded a long and fearful cry. It was the same cry with which often in the backwoods of Virginia they had

rushed into battle with the Indians, and was no less terrifying that the war whoop of the Illinois themselves. At the same moment the men began firing their rifles, until the sound reached those in the outskirts and echoed far beyond the river and into the woods. There was an answering shout from the companies of Captain Harrod and Captain Helm and the hurrying of feet, and the firing of guns.

When Clark heard all the noise and confusion his own men were making and the answering shouts of the oncoming soldiers, he laughed aloud, and said to Bowman, "It sounds like a thousand men. I wonder if these people think we are going to scalp them outright and throw their bodies into the river."

"Very likely," replied the Captain. "These French are given to emotions and have been told that we are worse than savages."

"Let them believe what they will. It will make things all the easier for us in the end," remarked Clark.

"To think of less than two hundred men taking a town by surprise this way! If the place had been properly guarded it could have held off a thousand of us," was the comment of Bowman, in some disgust at the careless way of the French commander.

"They may rally yet, and defeat our purpose. Therefore we must keep them in terror. They are a changeable people and once over their fright these officers may get their men together," replied Clark, with some anxiety.

The town was now full of soldiers. There were but few streets and not more than two hundred and fifty houses in all. The men were making a deal of noise, what with shouting and firing of guns, and the terrified inhabitants, aroused from their sleep were lighting torches and appearing at the doors and windows and asking what it all meant.

The soldiers replied by shouting, "Long Knives! Long Knives!" and this was enough to close every window and barricade every door.

Clark sent a detachment of Bowman's men to tell the others to inform all the people that they must keep in their houses, not to appear in the streets, and that they must give up all their firearms of every sort whatsoever. If any one refused to surrender his gun, or came outside his house he would be shot instantly. This last order, however, was for the people's ears only. Private instructions were that all who refused or appeared outside were to be arrested and brought before the Colonel himself.

The instructions were quickly given to all the

soldiers, and the town was patrolled in every direction. Guards were stationed at the ends of all the streets to see that no one escaped to give alarm to other villages. Some of the soldiers spoke French and those were the ones who were told to communicate the Colonel's commands to the people. These soldiers went up and down in front of the houses and called out to the people inside.

"Keep inside your houses. Do not come on the streets. If you do the Long Knives will shoot you. Hand all your guns and hunting knives out through the windows. If we find you have kept any of them back we will kill all the family."

Of course this order was largely for effect, for Clark had no such purpose. But he knew that it was good strategy to terrify an enemy particularly such temperamental people as these Frenchmen. The order had its effect at once. Not a soul appeared and not a protest was made.

The soldiers who followed behind those giving the orders, took the guns and knives of the people as they were thrust out of the windows to them or thrown on the ground. With these came powder horns, belts, old swords, and anything that could be called weapons. As soon as these implements of warfare were delivered or

thrown out, the windows were closed and shut tight, often with a muttered oath on the part of the men, and a cry of terror from some woman or child.

Outside the uproar continued. Inside the people shuddered, expecting every instant to hear the shrieks and groans of their neighbors and kindred and friends announcing that a general massacre had commenced.

There were two companies of French soldiers in the town, quartered in the houses of the people. They had received no orders from their officers and did not know what to do. There was no place for them to assemble and no one to take charge of them. They were as disorganized as the people themselves. From these companies it was necessary to secure all their guns and equipment. Therefore the men asked at every house, "Any soldiers in here? If so, tell them to hand out all their arms. If they fail it will go ill with all of you."

This was enough. The soldiers, willingly or unwillingly, handed their guns out to the men, the officers handed their swords and belts, and all the ammunition of the fort and all in the town fell into the hands of Clark long before it was dawn.

Nor did the men forget their hunger. In the

excitement of the surprise they had overlooked their condition and had gone on to the capture of Kaskaskia without thinking of their needs. Now they felt the pressure of hunger, and as they went from house to house they demanded food as well as guns. This also the people supplied, and the ludicrous sight was presented of a hungry soldier grabbing guns with one hand, and food with the other as they were handed out of the windows of the houses.

There was still plenty of noise during the night. Clark intended for the people to get their fill of fear and distrust. He wished them to be in the depths of despair and to fear the worst, so that whatever orders he had in mind for their safety would bring as great a reaction as possible. So while the people were in a panic of fear and shuddered in their houses and dared not show their faces even at the doors and windows, and the Long Knives were making the night hideous by their noises in the streets, and while the guns were being collected and the people and soldiers completely disarmed, the remaining hours of the night passed.

It was the 4th of July, 1778, and Kaskaskia, the open door for the conquest of the Northwest Territory, all that great empire from the Ohio River to the Great Lakes, was in the hands of

George Rogers Clark and his little band of Virginians and Kentuckians. It was a slim hold they had, and a dangerous tenure. But they were not ones to be afraid. They were fighting for their country and were dealing with a people who cared little for the British and could easily be changed in their alliances if they were treated with consideration.

## CHAPTER IV

### WINNING THE PEOPLE

WHEN daylight came, Clark sent Bowman, with a few soldiers, to find out who were the principal citizens of Kaskaskia and to bring three or four of them to him that he might get some information from them. They came before him in such a terrified state of mind and spoke so incoherently and begged for their lives so piteously that what information they gave was of no value, because it added but little to what he already knew.

As for the Indians, the citizens were more definite. They said that a body of the savages lay at this time in Cahokia, a small village sixty miles up the Mississippi river, and that they were under the influence of Hamilton and had been talked to by Rocheblave, and were not the friends of the Americans. "Do not blame us for all that, sir," pleaded the distracted citizens. "We had nothing to do with them, and did not even attend the meeting they had with the British and French."

Clark merely smiled, knowing that what they said was probably true, but not wishing yet to relieve their minds by disclosing his real purpose.

Turning to the citizens, he remarked, "You may as well remain until I decide further what to do with all the people of this town." Clark had already installed himself and his soldiers in the guard hall of the fort.

The first act of the Colonel in the morning was to withdraw all the troops from the streets, and to station them at different points around the town, arranging for their comfort and giving orders to the men to take from the stores only enough to supply their wants. In this way the men secured food, ammunition and other things they needed and took their places at the stations appointed them. When they left the streets they told the people that Clark had given permission for the inhabitants to leave their houses and walk about.

The doors were opened and the French villagers began to appear and look in alarm around them, wondering what was going to be the fate of themselves and their town. They gathered in groups here and there and held council in low tones, and the word Long Knives was the one most frequent upon their lips.

Among those on the streets was the Roman

Catholic priest, Pierre Gibault, who was the representative of the Bishop of Quebec in the Illinois country. Gathering around him five or six of the oldest of the Kaskaskians, they approached the guard hall where Clark was sleeping after being awake all night. The sentry kept them waiting for an hour and then awoke the Colonel and told him that a delegation of citizens was without waiting to see him. Clark arose and prepared to see them for he easily guessed what was their mission.

Now Clark was in reality of a gentle nature, and kindly disposed towards everybody. Only the emergency of war could make him severe to his enemies, and as for cruelty it was out of the question. It was his original intention to be lenient to these inoffensive people, and to attach them to his interest if he could. In fact such were the instructions he had received from Governor Henry. If he had appeared the savage that the people had been taught he was, it was only for the purpose of terrifying them into a quiet and bloodless submission to his orders, and not from any liking of the torture their minds had suffered during the night. Therefore he welcomed the coming of the delegation and was prepared to do his part in a way that would lead to the best results.

The priest and the old citizens came in the hall where Clark was seated, attended by a few of his officers. The delegation was so confused that at first they could say nothing. Before them was a rough young American, strong and well built, thick sandy hair, grown long and matted, blue eyes and heavy shaggy eyebrows. He had taken off his fur cap and laid it on the floor beside him, but he wore a belt in which was a hunting knife. He looked more like a backwoodsman than a commander. His officers were as rough as he. The appearance of the group gave little comfort to the Frenchmen who had come to appeal to them.

Clark broke the silence, "Well, what have you to say?"

The priest timidly inquired, "Which of you is Colonel Clark? I would speak to him."

"I am Colonel Clark," said that official. "You may speak to me whatever is in your mind."

"I am Pierre Gibault, the priest, and these are my friends. We have come to say that we know our present situation is due to the fate of war, and that we are prisoners in your hands to do with as you will. We have been told that you are the leader of the Long Knives, and that you have a large and strong body of followers

with you, who have come from heaven knows where or how. We know you have captured our town and that we are at your mercy. We are not here to dispute with you but to intercede with you."

Here the priest stopped and looked around. Clark made no movement, and finally said, "Go on."

"We have been told by the British that the Long Knives are cruel; that they scalp, murder, burn, destroy; and that they kill little children and carry off the women. We are here to beg you to spare our lives for we are not warlike people."

Clark could barely suppress his indignation at these words and was on the point of bursting out his protest. He restrained himself, however, and the priest went on:

"If you spare our lives we shall be grateful for that much. If you turn us out into this wilderness, making us leave our homes and possessions, we beg that you will not separate our little families, and that you will allow us food and clothing for a journey to another village. All the Indians around here are not our friends. If we were driven out of Kaskaskia, the old and young would die of exposure, the savages would

get some of us and only a few could reach any other settlement."

By this time Clark could hold himself in no longer. His real nature was in revolt at such possibilities as the priest suggested. When the good man finished and waited for his reply, the Colonel rose and said:

"Father, you and your people mistake us for savages. We have hearts just as you have, and we love our women and children just as you do. We do not scalp, nor murder, nor burn, nor destroy. We have never killed children or carried off women. The British have told you what was not true. We are Long Knives, for men only, and not then, except for ruthless savages, who have come into our country to get scalps to sell in Detroit. We shall not strip you of your food and clothing, nor drive you from your houses. We do not take bread from the mouths of the helpless. You may go back and tell your people they are safe."

The delegation listened with wonder and surprise. This was not what they expected to hear. The priest stammered forth: "You are not going to hurt us, nor drive us out of our town? You are going to let us stay here in safety?"

"I am not going to hurt you, nor drive you from this town, and you may stay here in

safety," said Clark, hastily. "Go and tell the people to assemble at this place and I shall speak to them all so that they can understand me. I am no orator, but they can get the meaning of my words somehow."

The delegation quickly withdrew, their eyes shining with satisfaction and their faces covered with smiles. Bowman put his hand on Clark's shoulder with a gentle pressure and the Colonel knew what was in the mind of his Captain though no words were spoken.

It did not take long for the priest and his companions to spread the news of the words of the American. The inhabitants had waited with apprehension and fear for the end of the interview. The mysterious and unlooked-for approach and the sudden onslaught of the backwoodsmen, together with their uncouth and fierce appearance, and the grim silence of the leader and his men were by no means reassuring that the stories of the atrocities of the Long Knives were not true. The villagers did not readily lay aside their fears in spite of the words of the Commander to the priest. Their minds were still full of forebodings for their future.

It was not long before the people of the village had assembled before the guard hall. The men were all there, including most of the soldiers.

The officers were still confined to their quarters and under special guard. The women were also there, some of them holding children by the hands. It was a quiet and anxious gathering, not all of whom could understand English.

Clark and a few of his officers appeared at the door and faced the silent and fearful crowd. It was the first time most of them had seen him. When he stood before them in his torn and muddy clothes, his rough hunting shirt, his hair and his beard showing a month's growth, their perplexity grew deeper, for they were accustomed to officers in bright uniforms and with shining swords.

Clark spoke slowly so that those who understood him might communicate his words to the others.

"My friends," said he, "the Long Knives have not come among you to butcher you and burn your houses and carry off your women and children as you have been told. We do not make war upon the helpless and innocent. We are not savages, like those who have been sent across our own border to take the scalps of our own people to the Hair Buyer in Detroit. We have come to punish those who have done us harm, and to prevent the horrid butchery of our own wives and children. We are not here to plunder your

houses nor disturb your occupations. We have come a far way and with much hardship, for we have determined minds and long arms for our enemies. On the other hand we have tender feelings, and willing hands for those who would be our friends. I want you to know that a treaty has been made between the King of France and the American people, by which the French have agreed to help America in this war against the British, and to help us gain our independence of England. You are French and you still love France. Since the French are our friends, I shall expect you to be my friends, and to take the oath of allegiance to America. If you will take this oath you shall be allowed to go about your daily affairs in the same way as before the coming of the Long Knives."

The faces of the crowd cleared with pleasure. When all had understood the words of the speaker they broke into murmurs of applause and into cheers. This was far different from what they had expected. France had become an ally of America, and had broken with England. America's war was therefore their war, and they all were allies. With one voice they declared, "We will take the oath of allegiance to America and be friends with the Long Knives. The American

flag is our flag, and the American cause is our cause."

Clark saw this change of sentiment with great satisfaction. It was the carrying out of the purpose he had in mind. After awhile, he continued, "To prove to you my sincerity, you are all at liberty to return to your homes and go about your business as before. You shall not be disturbed, and you need not have the least fear of harm. My men will protect you rather than hurt you. Only you must each of you swear to become American citizens and to stand by the American cause."

The crowd eagerly swore allegiance by holding up their hands and uttering exclamations of satisfaction with the change. Since France had gone with America, they also would go.

Father Gibault was in the crowd but his face had not yet cleared of all fear. He had heard much of friendship and allegiance, and the flag, but nothing of religion and the church. His mind was on the spiritual welfare of his people. When Clark had concluded his speech, the priest stepped forward, and said:

"Sir, we are all Roman Catholics, and I am the priest of this people. In swearing allegiance to the American flag, what has become of our religion, and what church shall we serve? How

generous will you be with our faith and our services?"

The Colonel replied promptly, "Father Gibault, under the American flag all men are free to worship God as they choose. They can have any faith they like, belong to any church they prefer, and attend any worship that pleases them. America is a land of the free in religion as well as in government. You and your people may remain Roman Catholics as long as you desire, and can have your services as usual. You shall not be disturbed."

This was enough to allay the fears and satisfy the feelings of the French. The crowd broke into loud cheers, and their agitation of alarm gave way to transports of joy. The people ran to their homes and threw open doors and windows. Bunting was hung out as upon the occasion of a holiday. The bells were rung, and the people gathered in the church to offer thanksgiving for what they believed to be their deliverance from the hands of barbarians. Parades were formed, and bands of citizens marched up and down the streets singing songs. When evening came bonfires were lighted and crowds gathered for dancing and rejoicing. The mercurial French were now as loud in praise of Colonel Clark and the

Long Knives as before they had been in mortal terror of them.

From that time the village assumed the regular course of daily affairs. The people went freely about the streets. The citizens and French soldiers mingled with the Long Knives, the stores did their usual business, and the going and coming of the inhabitants were not interfered with. They were now under the American flag.

Rocheblave was still a prisoner. He and his wife were held under guard in the fort, and were not allowed the freedom that had been granted other inhabitants. The reason was simple; Rocheblave was most violent in his denunciation of Clark and the Americans, and nothing that was said to him could pacify him in the least. It was the hope of Clark to win over the French Commander, and to restore to him the property which had been seized, which consisted of a few negro slaves belonging to his wife. These slaves had not been sold, nor confined, but were held as property of the American government, and were used by Clark to take care of the fort and to wait upon his officers.

Clark decided to give back the slaves to Rocheblave, and to treat him most leniently. Knowing how easily a French officer could be influenced by kindness and attention he invited his prisoner

to dine with him and a few American officers in the fort. He expected at this dinner to offer a parole to Rocheblave and his wife, and to restore to them the slaves he had taken.

Every preparation that the village afforded was made for the occasion. Several days had passed since Clark had dismissed the fears of the people, and their hospitality to him was unbounded. Therefore he had no trouble to secure supplies. As for himself and his own officers, being Virginians, they made the best of their surroundings and opportunities, and presented a different appearance than when they arrived in the village. Rocheblave was allowed to appear in his uniform, though his sword was removed and he bore no arms.

Clark, Bowman, Harrod, and Helm were there, and a few others. Rocheblave came in and stood before the company, with a sullen defiance upon his face.

Clark very politely said to them all, "Now that our guest has arrived, we will no longer consider him a prisoner, but for the time being an officer of rank. Let us all be seated."

Rocheblave folded his arms and replied, "I am still your prisoner, and shall not be considered your guest. I have come here not to eat your food and drink your wine, but to tell you that you

are all rebels and robbers. You have rebelled against the British government and deserve to be hanged as traitors. You have stolen my property and my slaves and you should be in prison instead of me. Furthermore I believe you still intend violence against these people and have deluded them with soft words against the day when you will fall upon them and drive them into the wilderness or worse."

Clark and his officers were aghast at these words. The Colonel was gentle enough at heart, but his temper was quick to flame when blown upon by such accusations as he had just heard.

"Monsieur, you are out of your senses to act and think as you do. Such conduct is unbearable on your part, and we are not capable of the things you accuse us of."

"Perhaps not, but that is my belief," said Rocheblave, beginning to lose control of himself. He had had time to brood over his imprisonment and disgrace and was now venting his anger and mortification.

Clark now flamed in wrath. "You shall apologize to us here for this insult or else by heaven, back you go to your prison and in irons too. I did intend to treat you fairly and take your parole as a gentleman and an officer and give you back your slaves but you make it out of the ques-

tion. Quick, sir, retract these words, or it shall go ill with you."

Rocheblave smiled disdainfully, "No, you are a parcel of rebels and thieves. I shall have nothing to do with you, nor take your parole. I am your prisoner, and you may have your way. Had it not been for my wife and the knowledge that the Long Knives were as bloodthirsty as the Illinois, I should have died rather than surrender."

The French officer had worked himself into a frenzy. Realizing that he had been taken unawares, captured in his bed, overcome by a snare which diligence on his part could have prevented, that he was a disgraced officer and a prisoner to a lot of rough frontiersmen, his pride bereft him of his prudence. So when Clark again broke forth, "Sir, you are a madman, and were you not my guest and a prisoner, I would choke those words back into your throat."

Rocheblave lost control of himself. His face turned red, his hand instinctively sought his sword, but he was unarmed and helpless. Seizing a heavy chair he raised it and advanced upon the Colonel as if to strike him to the floor. Bowman and the others sprang forward and held him. In their strong arms he was as powerless as a child, and when the chair had been wrenched

from his grasp and he had been thrown back against the wall, he stood glaring like a wild animal at his captors.

"Here, take this crazy man back to the guard house and put him in irons," said Clark, to the guard at the door. When they came and led the still furious Frenchman away, the American remarked to the others, "That ends all hope of giving him back his property. I shall send him as prisoner of war to Williamsburg and let Governor Henry decide what to do with him."

In a short while a guard started over the mountains carrying Rocheblave as prisoner of war to Williamsburg, the capital of Virginia. When he reached that place he was put in prison, but was shortly afterwards released on parole. He broke his parole two years later and fled to New York. His wife remained in Kaskaskia, where she went to live with her people.

Several weeks afterward, Clark sent for Madame Rocheblave. When she appeared before him he saw that she was still a beautiful woman, belonging to one of the best families of Kaskaskia.

"Madame, I have a letter from Governor Patrick Henry of Virginia directing me to return to you your slaves," said the Colonel, rising and

bowing. "Your husband is safe in Williamsburg and is out on parole."

"Yes, I have had word from him," said the Frenchwoman.

"Shall I send you the slaves?" asked the Colonel.

"No. I have no need for them."

"The letter also says that I am to assist you from the public stores if you are in need. Is there anything I can do for you?"

"My people here can provide for me. There is nothing you can do." And with those words she left the presence of the young American, who was full of admiration for the spirit she displayed and of regret that she declined his offers of assistance.

Subsequently the slaves were sold for five hundred pounds and the proceeds distributed among the troops as prize money.

Among the prominent citizens of Kaskaskia was Gabriel Cerré, who was reported to have left town before its capture by the Virginians. He had extensive business connections in St. Louis and Quebec, had loaned considerable sums of money to a number of people in Kaskaskia, and was accustomed to dealing with the Indians, exchanging ammunition, clothing, and such articles

as the savages like, for the rich products of the forests.

In the village was the family of Cerré, and a large assortment of merchandise, which was kept in his store against the time when the tribes would assemble for talk and would bring into town their own wares for exchange.

It had been suggested to Clark by several of the citizens that Cerré was involved in much of the Indian atrocity that had vexed the border settlements. Indeed, he was accused of inciting them to go on the warpath against the whites, and of supplying them with guns and knives and war paint, and with whatever else he could induce them to buy. It was intimated that Cerré thought more of his trade than he did of the consequences of what he sold or said, and that he was among those who passed the word on to the sons of the forest that a white man's scalp was worth a deal of money in Detroit or even in Vincennes.

"I do not believe all I hear about this Frenchman," said Clark to Bowman one day. "He is not here to defend himself, and furthermore, a lender of money and a prosperous merchant often makes as many enemies as friends. I should like to get him on our side if we could."

"We need all the friends we can get in this wilderness," replied Bowman. "Here we are

with less than two hundred men trying to conquer and hold a territory as big as France, and not a soldier within three hundred miles to help us. Yes, I think we need Cerré and all the others we can get."

"How can we get him back to Kaskaskia, and win him over?" asked the Colonel.

"Put a guard around his house, shut his family up tight, and close his store against all customers, and tell them that it was done because Cerré was accused of inciting the Indians."

Clark thought for a moment over the plan proposed, and decided it was worth trying. Perhaps the merchant would return and explain things, and Clark could win him over. Accordingly a guard was placed around his house, and his store, and it was given out that Cerré was suspected of inciting the Indians, and that if it were true Clark was going to confiscate everything he had. The Colonel took care that this action should be given such notice that the merchant in St. Louis could not fail to be informed of it.

Now the Colonel had not forbidden the people of Kaskaskia to go wherever they chose. They were at just as much liberty as they ever were, and hunters and peddlers and woodsmen were constantly going and coming along the trails into

and out of town. It did not take long for one of the traders to find his way to St. Louis and seek out Cerré with the news of Kaskaskia.

"The Long Knives have captured the town, have put the Commandant in irons and sent him under guard to Virginia, and have made all the people swear allegiance to the American flag." All this to the amazement of Cerré, as well as his deep concern.

"What have the Long Knives done to the people?" asked he.

"Oh, nothing. They go about their business as usual, the church is open, and we come and go as we like. There is no difference that I can see. One flag is as good as another, so long as you can convince the Colonel that you mean no harm."

"And what about my family and warehouse?"

"The Colonel suspects you of stirring up the Indians and sending them on the warpath. At least he has been told so. He has put a guard around your house, shut up your family, and closed your store. He has said he will keep this up until he finds out the truth."

The merchant was much alarmed. He also had heard of the terrible deeds of the Long Knives, and dreaded to meet their Commander in his present state of mind. He expected to hear that his store had been burned, his slaves

sold, his household goods confiscated, and that his family had been sent prisoners back to Virginia. He hastened to the Spanish Governor at St. Louis and secured a letter to Clark, asking for safe conduct in case the merchant came back to Kaskaskia. He secured another letter from the Commandant at Sainte Genevieve, a small fort not far from Kaskaskia across the Mississippi River. He procured a number of letters from prominent citizens. All these letters requested the American Commander to receive Gabriel Cerré and to guarantee him safety. These letters were sent by a special messenger to Kaskaskia and were delivered to the Colonel with some degree of formality.

Clark read them with much interest. Here was a man of influence and importance, as well as of wealth. He had friends among the officers of nearby ports and towns. He seemed to stand well among the people who knew him. Such a man should be on the side of the Americans.

The Colonel was a strategist as well as a soldier, and he knew how to use his opportunity. He was not quick to dispel fears, nor lay down his purposes before the eyes of his enemies too soon. His great skill lay in his ability to keep his own counsel and play a secret game. He knew well that he had to win his way by strategy

and not by force. Therefore he kept the messengers waiting for an hour or more, and then told them in firm but courteous words:

"I shall pay no attention to these letters, nor shall I promise anything to this Gabriel Cerré. All the letters you could bring would not make me forgive a man who had stirred up those savages against my people. If he is guilty he shall pay. If he is innocent he has nothing to fear."

"But, sir, Monsieur Cerré is innocent of these charges."

"Then let him come here alone, and prove it. He is a sensible man. Tell him I am no bloodthirsty savage seeking to destroy a village, but I am an American officer who has captured this town and this territory and intend to keep it. I desire no more communications from him, they make me more suspicious. If he wishes to see me the roads are open, the boats on the river are free to go and come, and I shall be here for some time."

Saying this with apparent heat, Clark folded the letters and laid them aside. The messengers were perplexed and hesitated to withdraw. Finally they inquired, "And if Monsieur Cerré should come will you give him a hearing, before you condemn him?"

"He need have no fear of me. Ask Father

Gibault and the people of Kaskaskia. Go back to the merchant and tell him what they say."

The messengers withdrew. In a few days Cerré appeared in Kaskaskia unattended. He did not wait to visit his family, but went at once to the house where Clark was staying. When he came before the Colonel he asked:

"Of what am I charged, that you should put a guard over my house and close up my store?"

Clark spoke to him plainly but kindly. "Monsieur Cerré, I have been told that you encourage the Indians in their attacks upon the white people of Kentucky, that you sell them guns, powder, knives, tomahawks and war paint, and secretly inform them that Hamilton will buy scalps at Detroit or Vincennes. I consider such conduct inhuman, and those who are guilty of it should be punished. All I wish to know is whether such charges are true or not."

To this the merchant replied, "Sir, I am but a trader in these parts, who has built up a fair fortune in honest business. I have sold all the things you mention to the savages who came into this village, but so has every other merchant. They need ammunition to get game, they use paint at other times than during war. They have their own quarrels among themselves and a tomahawk is a legitimate article to sell. I also

sell them food and clothing and buy from them skins and meat. I have never stirred them up to war with the whites, and I know nothing of Hamilton and his offer to purchase scalps. You have been misinformed."

"There are those who have accused you of these things."

"Perhaps, and there are those who owe me a lot of money and who would be glad to see me sent out of the country so that they would be free of their debts. They may be my accusers. My ruin would be their salvation."

Clark was thoughtful, and looked into the face of the Frenchman with interest. He seemed honest and fair minded and incapable of the thing of which he had been charged. The Colonel was sure that he was speaking the truth, but he was not ready yet to let him off so easily. He proceeded to tell the merchant all about the differences between England and the colonies; of the oppression and injustice of the mother country; of Lexington and Concord, and Bunker Hill; of the Declaration of Independence; of the war in the North, and in the southern colonies; of George Washington; of the surrender of Burgoyne and the hardships of Valley Forge; and lastly of the alliance with France and how the French king had said the Americans were worthy

of their independence. He concluded by striking his hands on the table and saying, "And, Monsieur Cerré, we are going to win this war against England. France is our ally and all good Frenchmen here and elsewhere should stand by us."

The Frenchman confessed that in these remote regions he had heard little and cared less about the war then in progress. He was just a merchant bent on making money, but what Clark had told him interested him greatly. He then said boldly to the Colonel, "There is but one way to decide whether I am an honest man or an inhuman creature such as you have been told, and that is to face me with those who accuse me. I am ready to meet them."

"Step into the next room and close the door, and I shall send for those who have charged you with inciting the Indians."

The merchant did as he was told, and a soldier was sent to call those who had made the accusations. The accusers soon appeared attended by a large number of citizens. When they were all before the Colonel he opened the door and called for Cerré to come out and hear what the men had to say.

Confronted by the merchant the men were so astonished that they were thrown into a panic.

He was one of the leading personages of Kaskaskia, in high regard everywhere. Those who accused him were by no means in his class.

"I do not wish to condemn any man unheard. Here is Monsieur Cerré, who you said was a wretched instigator of barbarous deeds by the savages. What have you to say now that he is before you? If he is guilty he shall be punished. If not, you shall retract your words and confess to your falsehoods."

The men began to whisper one with another. The citizens retired, followed one by one by those who had preferred charges against the merchant. Clark waited patiently for the result. Finally but one man was left in the room. Clark turned to him and inquired, "What have you to say?"

"Nothing," was the reply. "We but repeated what we heard others say."

"Who are the others?" demanded Cerré, indignantly.

"I do not know," replied the man.

"There are no others, and you are a malicious slanderer. You owe me money and so do those who came with you. Out upon you. You know what you have said is false."

The man hung his head in silence and confusion. Clark looked at him with contempt and ordered him to leave the room. As soon as he

had left, the Colonel turned to the merchant and said:

"Monsieur Cerré, I am convinced you are an honest and fair-dealing man. I am sorry I listened to those people. You are at liberty to return to your family, and the guard shall be taken from around your house and your store."

The merchant shook hands with the Colonel, and departed. Afterward he took the oath of allegiance to the American government and was one of the best friends Clark had in Kaskaskia.

## CHAPTER V

### THE CONQUEST SPREADS

THERE were other French towns along the Mississippi that Clark knew should be brought under subjection to the American arms. Fifteen miles up the river lay Prairie du Rocher, nine miles beyond that was St. Philips, and thirty-six miles further was the considerable village of Cahokia. All of these were smaller and of less consequence than Kaskaskia, but still they were posts of such size that their conquest would bring the Illinois country well within the power of the American commander.

Affairs at Kaskaskia being reasonably peaceful, and the inhabitants friendly to Clark and his men, on account of their generous treatment, the Colonel now turned his attention to the outlying posts.

One evening about dark, Captain Bowman with thirty men on horseback started along the trail leading to Prairie du Rocher. No one of the men knew where the party was bound. Secrecy had always been the strength of Clark's

manoeuvres, and he saw no reason to announce his plans to anyone except Bowman himself.

While the inhabitants of Prairie du Rocher were asleep the men entered the town. The noise of horsemen riding into the village and the whooping of soldiers aroused the people who were as much astonished and terrified as ever the Kaskaskians had been. The thirty men made as much noise as a regiment. It was the same kind of night surprise and had the same result.

"What do you want with us?" called out the people from their houses, for there were no soldiers to defend the settlement.

"Come out and swear allegiance to the American flag and we will pass on," answered Bowman.

"How many of you are there?" asked the citizens, thinking they might withstand a few marauders.

"Enough to hang every man of you who refuses," was the reply, in fierce tones, for the Captain had learned from his commanding officer that threats had a good effect.

The people flocked from their little houses and in a few hours Bowman had made them swear allegiance to America, and surrender their village to him. Then he rode on to St. Philips where he surprised the people in the same way and took their oaths to the flag.

All this was easily done for those places were nothing more than groups of a few houses without defence, the inhabitants were unprepared for an attack, and were terrified at the noise made by Bowman's men.

Cahokia, however, was larger and more important. About one hundred families lived there, with a commander in charge. It was about sixty miles up the river from Kaskaskia and was a favorite place for Indian gatherings and treaties.

Bowman proceeded with his horsemen up the river trail the night after the taking of the smaller villages and arrived in Cahokia in the same way he had entered the other places. It was morning, however, when he marched through the village and approached the house of the Commander.

Knocking on the door, he called out, "Open in the name of Colonel Clark, and the Governor of Virginia."

The Commander was astonished as all the others had been. Coming out to meet Captain Bowman and seeing thirty or more fierce looking soldiers on horseback, armed with long rifles and hunting knives, and not knowing how many others there were, he immediately replied:

"I do not know Colonel Clark or the Governor

of Virginia, but I see there is no use in opposing such a force as you have. What do you demand of me?"

"I demand the surrender of this town, and that the people take the oath of allegiance to the American flag."

The Commander complied at once. He knew almost nothing about the war going on or the difference between the flags, but he did know that any refusal on his part might be disastrous to himself and to the people of the village.

Bowman went through the town and assured the people that no harm should come to them. They then gave his men such food and supplies as they needed after their long ride along the dim trails through the night. He then took possession of a large storehouse, the best one in the village, which offered some chance of resistance in case of attack.

There was one man who saw how small a force had captured the town, and who came to Bowman with a threatening voice. "I have sent a messenger to one hundred and fifty Indians who are just outside the town and told them to come in and tomahawk your entire party. They are friends of ours and enemies of yours. I advise you to leave here at once and let this town alone."

Bowman was not to be frightened by the threat,

and ordered the man seized and confined in a room in the house. Fearing he might have done as he boasted, the Captain ordered his men to lie with their guns ready during the night to repel any attacks. It turned out, however, that the man was telling a falsehood, and that no such message had been sent.

In the morning, Bowman ordered all the citizens to appear before him. He then explained to them the best he could the meaning of the war, the purpose of the British, and told them particularly of the French alliance. After he had concluded, he let them know that it would be well for them to take the oath of allegiance to the American cause. Though his words were persuasive, they contained an order that was well understood. "I desire to treat you as friends," he said. "If you decline to take the oath, I shall be obliged to treat you as enemies."

This was enough for the one hundred citizens of that village. Before ten o'clock all of them had taken the oath and had become American citizens, including the irate man who had threatened Bowman with the savages.

In the way we have related, without shedding a drop of blood, without injuring a single citizen, without the loss of a single man, Clark had accomplished the conquest of the Illinois country,

and had made the inhabitants of the principal town and two smaller villages change their allegiance from the British to the American cause.

It was no great military feat, for there was but little opposition to his movements. He had so far met no unfriendly Indians, and the people of the towns and villages had promptly responded to all his demands. Any great show of opposition by a determined force could readily have turned him back, and thwarted his purpose. Any wrong movement on his part could have aroused enough people to have made his position perilous. The marvel of it all is that he and his small force should have had the courage to march so far into an enemy's country, without exact knowledge of what they were going to meet, and how they would be received, and how they could maintain any position they might capture.

Much was due to Clark's kindness of heart, his suavity of manner, and his real gentleness in dealing with people. His enemies he could confine and even punish, but the people at large received such consideration from him that he easily won them over to his side. After all, a conquest without battle or bloodshed may demand a higher order of genius than one that rolls red and ruthless over life and property.

It was now high time for Clark to turn his

attention to the savages that Hamilton and his agents had made so unfriendly to the Kentucky and the Virginia settlements. To win over five or six hundred white men to his cause was one thing, to deal with the thousands of Indians all around him was quite another. There were many nations to the northward and northeastward along the Mississippi that were a real menace to his little band of sturdy backwoodsmen and their French allies. It was necessary to gain their friendship and to do so quickly.

The Indians were somewhat confused as to the condition of affairs. Up to this time the French and the English had been on the same side, and were against the Americans. Now the French traders who came among them began to tell tales on the British and to counsel the chiefs to make friends with the Long Knives.

"The big chief of the Long Knives is your friend. He is bigger and stronger than the pale-face at Detroit. He has conquered all this country from the lakes down to the rivers, and will punish his enemies. He has a house in Kaskaskia, where his warriors live, and from there he can strike your villages, kill your young men and carry away your wives and children. If he is your friend, he will let you hunt over this land and will protect you from your enemies."

The curiosity and fear of the nearby chiefs were aroused. The head men of the Kaskaskias, the Peorias, and the Michiganies came into Kaskaskia and sought Clark. After much ceremony they made a treaty with him and declared him to be their Big Chief instead of the paleface chief at Detroit.

But these were few compared to the many around Cahokia and beyond. It was Clark's opinion that Indian treaties had not been carried on in a proper manner, and that the giving of presents and the making of promises and soft speeches showed weakness instead of strength, and that the Indians were to be subjected more by fear and threats than by fair words and gifts.

He knew the Indian nature, its greed and its treachery, its love of finery and display, its seeming goodwill behind which sometimes lay a murderous intent. Fear was the controlling force in all their actions, and they rarely made a treaty unless they were influenced by selfish motives or were forced to do so by a display of superior strength. Weakness was the one thing that the whites could not show. It was fatal to throw one's self upon the mercy of the savages, for they had no mercy. Therefore the Colonel undertook to overawe the savages, but still he intended no harm to them or their families.

Messengers, both French and Indian, were allowed to go to the tribes along the Mississippi and beyond, suggesting to the tribes to come to a gathering at Cahokia. "The Big Chief of the Long Knives will be at Cahokia and will meet his Indian brethren, and make a treaty with them." Clark was careful to tell the messengers not to invite the savages to the meeting, but to let them know that he would be on hand and they could see him if they wished. The Colonel desired the gathering to come from the Indian side rather than from any suggestion of his. He intended for the tribes themselves to seek his friendship, rather than for him to be seeking theirs.

Of course they came in great numbers. The savages flocked into Cahokia by the hundreds, perhaps a thousand or more. There were the Chippewas, the Ottawas, the Pottawattamies, the Winnebagoes, the Sacs and the Foxes, and a number of other nations. All of them were supposed to be at war with the Americans. But Clark knew that the Indians could be changed over night, and that the enemies of today were easily the friends of tomorrow.

Clark, with a guard of his own men, accompanied by a body of citizens from Kaskaskia, came to Cahokia shortly after the tribes began to arrive. He saw with amazement the great

crowd of painted savages that had flocked to the town to see the Big Chief, to hear what he had to say, to sue for peace if they were so inclined, to dance around the council fires, to eat and drink, and go through all the ceremonies of making a treaty. Any united action on their part could easily overwhelm him. His was but a handful compared to their numbers and force.

The Colonel went to the storehouse which had been turned into the semblance of a fort, and shut himself up for awhile. He did not intend for the savages to see him until they were convinced of his mysterious power, and their curiosity was aroused to a high pitch. At the end of the second day he sent for a number of chiefs and had them brought before him. His face was stern and his manner severe. "What brings you here into the town of the Big Chief? Do you not know his power covers all this land, and that his knives are long enough to reach everywhere? Do you seek for his friendship or do you want war?" he asked of them as they stood before him in all the bravery of paint and feathers.

"We have heard of the Big Chief, and the deeds of his warriors. The Indians have been told many lies by the British. We believe that the French tell us the truth, and that the Long Knives are our friends. We would smoke the

pipe of peace with the Americans," replied an old warrior who seemed to be the spokesman.

Clark regarded them as if in doubt. "See this rifle," said he. "It is but one, but back of it are thousands like it which the Long Knives can bring from the forest at night and whenever they blaze death always follows. A Long Knife never misses his aim. But the rifles of the Long Knives never blaze except at an enemy. The Great Father down in Virginia has sent me here to protect his children and not to kill them. The British have lied to you and told you that we would murder you. It is not so. If you want peace you can have it."

The chiefs looked at one another and grunted in satisfaction. They were already impressed by the manners of this young warrior and a new allegiance was already much to their liking.

"See this knife," said Clark, removing his hunting knife from his belt and running his hand along the keen edge. "I hold its handle in one hand, but its blade stretches way into the forest, and along the rivers and creeks, into your villages and wigwams where the women work and the children sleep. It is long and sharp and there is death on the point of it to all the enemies of the Great Father. Once it falls there is mourning in the tepee of the Indian."

The chiefs again looked at one another and shook their heads. They held up their open hands before them to show Clark they carried no weapons in their grasp. The spokesman responded for them:

"The French have told us all about the Big Chief and the Great Father in Virginia. We would have you give us the belt of peace that we might show it to the others."

But Clark was in no hurry. He finally dismissed the savage leaders and turned to the consideration of other affairs for the time. He knew that all the Indians were not friendly and that the promises of a few could not be relied on. In fact he had noticed that the delegation that had just left had cast suspicious eyes around the room and seen with surprise that only five or six soldiers were guarding him. They did not know that the Colonel had fifty trusty men in an adjoining room ready at any moment to prove the meaning of the name that had been given to them.

Night came on and was full of savage revelry. Cahokia was crowded with the braves walking up and down the narrow streets, and trading at the stores. Gaudy colored cloth and gay beads were bought and made to decorate greasy and painted bodies. Every now and then a brave would strut by, followed by a squaw with a

papoose in a basket on her back, and occasionally some yell from a group of young warriors indicated that one of them had been allowed more than his share of rum. On the edge of the village fires had been built around which sat the members of the various tribes eating, chanting their rude songs, and boasting of their exploits in war. The situation was not a happy one for the Americans.

Bowman and Clark were in conference in the fort. Said Bowman, "It all depends upon how you act, Colonel. Here we are with perhaps two hundred men in all, in a friendly village, it is true, but outside there are many times that number of Indians who are to be won over. It is not a matter of force but of skill. As for me I still fear some treachery."

The officers returned to their duties. The night wore on and the noise of the savages died down.

Now there was a party of Indians, stragglers from various tribes, by the name of Meadow Indians, who had accompanied the other tribes into town, and who had been promised a reward by several of the more influential and dangerous chiefs if they would kill Clark. This they readily consented to try, and for the purpose of carrying out their design, had pitched

their camp about a hundred yards from Clark's headquarters. They were an evil-looking lot, dirty and filthy, but not being very numerous, the Colonel had not paid any especial attention to them, and in fact could not have told them from many others who were not much better off in appearance.

It happened that a creek ran nearby the headquarters of the Colonel, and that a large body of Indians were camped on the other side, while the Meadow Indians were on the same side as the Colonel and his guard. The creek was only knee-deep but the bottom was muddy. A plot had been formed by the Meadows, in order to win the reward, to wade across the creek late at night, fire off their guns near the camp of the Indians, then recross the creek and fly to the quarters of Colonel Clark as if pursued. There they were to seek admission and protection inside the fort, where they were to put Clark and the guard to death. They had heard that the Colonel was protected by a small guard, not knowing of the reserve he kept near him for just such emergencies.

Bowman and Clark, with several Frenchmen, were talking over the perplexities of the situation at one o'clock at night, when an explosion of firearms across the creek attracted their attention.

Instantly the guard was ready, and the reserve in the room nearby awoke and seized their guns for what they supposed might be a midnight attack.

In a few minutes a dozen savages came running to the door of the quarters, holding their guns in their hands but not in readiness to fire. The moon was shining and they could be easily seen by the men as they came on. By the time they reached the door the whole guard was out and the Indians stopped abruptly.

"What do you want and why are you running here?" demanded the Colonel.

The savages, astonished at the size of the guard and knowing they could not carry out their purpose, nevertheless stuck to the story they had planned and stammered out that they had been attacked by a party of Indians from the other side of the creek or at least had been fired upon, and had run at once to Clark for protection.

"Those guns sounded as if they were fired on the other side and not on this side. The noise was further than your camp," said one of the officers of the guard.

"No—this side, back of our camp—Winnebagoes came over to kill us—we friends of the Long Knives," was the grunted and disjointed reply.

"Perhaps it is nothing but a few drunken savages firing off their guns to frighten these fellows. Let them go on back to their camp. It is a subject we need not inquire into," suggested Bowman.

The Frenchmen knew the treacherous nature of those particular Indians better than the Virginians knew it. They were not willing therefore for the matter to be dismissed so easily.

"Wait a moment," said one of them. "Let us look further into this matter. Will someone bring a torch or lantern that we may see these fugitives better?"

A guard brought a lantern, and it was discovered that the moccasins and leggings of the Indians were quite wet and muddy. "Ah, you have crossed the creek yourselves—perhaps you have fired the guns," cried out a Frenchman.

The assassins were quite confounded. They had not prepared for this emergency and did not know what answer to make. They started to escape but the guard seized them and held their guns to their bodies while Clark demanded:

"Tell me the truth. What does this mean? I will have you shot if you tell me a lie. I have means of knowing when you tell the truth."

The savages broke down in dismay and told how they had been bribed by several chiefs to kill

Clark and the guard. They confessed to the whole plot; how they had crossed the creek and fired off the guns, and had returned hoping to pass the guard which they supposed to be only five or six in number; how they were to murder all in the house and raise the alarm for a general uprising against the Americans. The miscreants did not hesitate to disclose all their intentions to the amazed and indignant Americans and Frenchmen.

This news added to the perplexity of the American commander, but he acted with his usual promptness and firmness.

"Take these scoundrels to the prison house and keep them under guard. I will let you know later what to do with them." Whereupon the downcast body of would-be murderers was led off and locked up in the prison house of the fort.

In the morning, when the news of the attempt upon the life of Clark was known, the white people of Cahokia took alarm and the whole village was under arms. Every man bore a gun and while they were less numerous than the savages, their fierce aspect and determined manner did much to overawe the Indians and to show them that the French were in the interest of Clark and his Long Knives.

The Colonel now determined upon a bold

stroke. Ordering a guard of fifty men, French and Americans, he directed them to go to the camps of the tribes and arrest the chiefs who had instigated a plot against his life and to put them in prison. This the guard did with much relish. Approaching each camp the guard seized the offending chief and before the others could recover from their astonishment their leader was dragged off at the point of a bayonet and led to the fort. In a short while all the principal chiefs were under arrest, and the tribes were without leadership.

The confinement of these chiefs threw the assembled Indians into great confusion. They wandered through the village in groups with anger upon their faces, but everywhere were met by armed guards. Fortunately there was no concerted attempt on their part to attack the fort or the town, and Clark soon discovered that he had only the imprisoned chiefs to deal with.

The prisoners asked to see the Colonel but he refused. "No," he said to the messenger, "You may tell them they are a set of villains, that they belong to the English, and will have to look to them for help. I am a man and a warrior, and know what to do with my enemies. I shall let them talk to me when I am ready."

He sent word to the other Indians that he was

not afraid of them and had plenty of good soldiers to punish them if they dared to raise a war whoop in the village. When night came on, the Colonel took every precaution against an uprising, but to show his apparent indifference he assembled a number of men and ladies of the village and at a house nearby the fort gave a dance that lasted nearly the whole night.

When morning came, he called a grand council of all the chiefs together. They came with some fear not knowing what Clark intended to do or say. When they had all assembled under a big tree in front of his quarters he turned to a body of his own soldiers and said, "Bring here those other chiefs who plotted to kill me and my men."

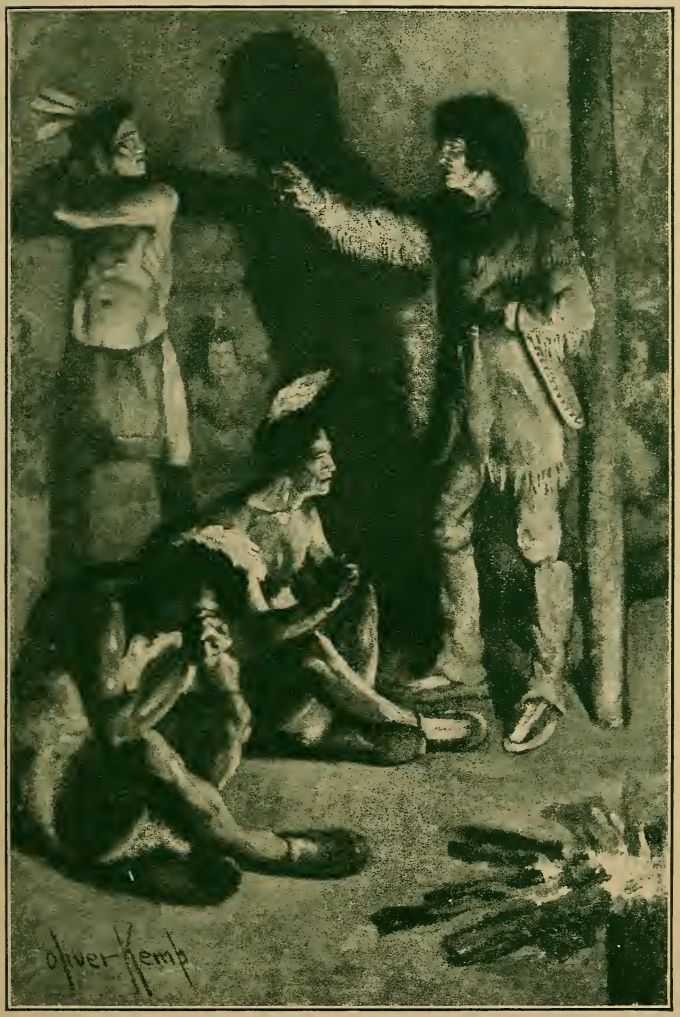
Soon the chiefs were brought before the assembly. They were securely tied in chains, and guarded by sturdy soldiers who pushed them forward in front of the others.

"You are not fit to sit with these chiefs here, for you intended to have me killed," said the Colonel, in angry tones. "I would have had you put to death, only you are not men but squaws, you are not warriors but a lot of women, who should put on dresses and be made to work. I think I shall give you some food in a bag, for you do not know how to hunt, and send you back to your own country."

The Indians hung their heads in shame, not for what they had tried to do but because they were caught and to an Indian that is the greatest crime of all. The other chiefs looked at them in derision, while the assembly waited to hear what they had to say.

One of them at length arose and held out to Clark a belt of peace, and began to make a speech full of explanations and apologies. He also laid a pipe on the table which had been brought out, and on which the Colonel had laid his sword. But as soon as Clark saw by the manner of the speaker that he was trying to explain and to make peace, he turned away and said in a fierce tone, "The Long Knives never make a treaty with women. They do not have to. Only with warriors do they have to make peace."

Saying this, the Colonel tossed the peace belt on the ground, took the pipe from the table and broke it into pieces, and then lifted the sword and held it in his hand. All the Indians were much impressed with this show of bravery, but the Colonel himself was undecided whether the assembly would decide with him or turn toward the prisoners. After all his attitude was pure bluff, for what could a few hundred white soldiers do against a thousand savages if they should sound the war whoop and lift their hatchets?




"No," he called out. "I do not need the blood of these warriors."

But Clark's firmness prevailed. After turning away from the offending chiefs he went among the other Indians and began to talk to them about the way the English had deceived them, and about the power of the Great Father in Virginia who had sent him to make peace with the children of the West.

The prisoners bent their heads together as if debating some question. At length two of the youngest of them advanced toward Clark, sat down on the ground and flung their blankets over their heads, to the astonishment of all the other Indians who grunted "Ugh! Ugh!" in token of satisfaction.

Then two of the older prisoners arose and spoke to the assembly. "If the Long Knife is angry with us, we are sorry. We want to make peace and be among the children of the Father in Virginia. These two braves offer their lives as a sacrifice to the Long Knife that he may make peace with the others."

When Clark saw the chiefs raise their stone hatchets and prepare to dash out the brains of the two Indians who sat with heads covered, he sprang forward and drew his sword, and stood before the helpless creatures on the ground.

"No," he called out. "I do not need the blood of these warriors. If you want peace you can

have it. Give me the belt in my hand, and if you will swear to be good children of the Great Father, we shall live in peace and you and your tribes shall escape the punishment due to those who love the English."

The chiefs lowered their hatchets and Clark lifted the blankets from the heads of the young braves and told them to stand up, which they doubtless were most willing to do. He then ordered the chains to be taken from the arms of all of them and told them to join the others, for he did not believe they were old women and squaws but good warriors.

That night the Colonel said to Bowman, "I was never so affected in all my life as I was when I saw those two fine Indian men cover their heads to receive the tomahawk. When I understood that they were to be killed as a peace offering to me, I believe I would have shot the first man that touched them."

The making of the treaty began. There was much smoking of pipes that were passed around the circle where the headmen sat, each one smoking a little and passing the pipe to his neighbor. There were long silences while the sons of the forest sat apparently lost in thought. Wrapped in their blankets in spite of the heat, their dusky bodies covered with paint and sleek with grease

and oil, their faces showing no emotion, the Indians sat for hours waiting for some one to speak. It took a long time to make a treaty, for the savages had come a far way and they were now in no hurry.

Clark and his officers also sat in the council, and smoked with the chiefs. After several hours of silence and contemplation, the Colonel rose, and drew from his jacket a belt of bloody wampum, which he held up before them. He then began to address the assembled chiefs:

"I know you have been friends of the English, and that you have taken scalps of white men and women along the borders of these rivers. You think the English are strong and can protect you from all the Long Knives who will come and take vengeance on you for the houses you have burned and the people you have killed. If you love the English go on back to them, but I tell you they are weak and cannot save you. The Americans are strong and can put you to death for your cruelties. You can choose between the English who have lied to you, and the American Father who tells you the truth and who wants you to be his children. If you want to go back to the English you can go, but you must take this bloody belt with you, and take war into the villages of the Indians, for the Long Knives will

come and there will be no English to save you. I am not offering you peace, I am offering you war. If you want peace you must ask for it. If you want war you can have it."

This was a bold speech, and Bowman was afraid that at any minute some hot headed chief would rise and let out a whoop for a general choice of war, and then there might be a general massacre of all the white men. But neither he nor Clark nor any of the men showed fear, but with the utmost unconcern remained seated for the Indians to speak.

The braves smoked on in silence pondering the words of the white man. At length one of the chiefs who seemed to have much influence and for whose word the others appeared to be waiting arose to reply.

"My braves have never taken white scalps, though I hear they are paid for in Detroit. We have never fought the Americans and have never burned their villages. There are other tribes whose warriors have sold scalps to the English chief, and who have burned the homes of the Americans, but they are not my braves nor my warriors. I shall not raise the war whoop against the Long Knives for I believe they are our friends."

To this several of the chiefs nodded in satisfac-

tion, after which there was another long silence. Then an old warrior rose and after chanting a rude song, he spoke of the many victories he and his braves had won. He declared he had taken white scalps and had burned the homes of settlers in the forest. "But now," continued he, "I have changed my heart, and I want to hold the Long Knife by the hand and call him brother."

All the others made similar talks. Several days were consumed in the speech making and ceremonies. The Indians were given food by the people of Cahokia, and the merchants traded with them for what wares they had brought along. But the inhabitants heartily wished the treaty was over and the dusky warriors back in the forest.

At length a treaty of peace was drawn up in which the chiefs of ten tribes agreed to live in friendship with the Americans, to take no more scalps, and to burn no more villages. From the Ohio to Lake Michigan along the Mississippi the hatchets were buried and the birds sang their songs of peace in the forest of the red men.

## CHAPTER VI

### AFFAIRS AT VINCENNES

WHILE all this was going on at Kaskaskia and at Cahokia over on the Mississippi River, Clark was not unmindful of affairs at the village of Vincennes over on the Wabash. It was his purpose to capture the fort there and thus add to the territory he had gained for the American flag. He sent for Father Gibault, the Catholic priest.

"You see the Long Knives mean the French no harm, and have treated you with kindness. We are all Americans and this is our soil, because we were all born here. You have influence at Vincennes over the people there. Will you go and persuade them to surrender peaceably to the Americans?"

The priest did not hesitate to do as the Colonel requested. Taking with him a few Frenchmen he set out across the prairies to the village where he was well known and where the people had for him the highest regard.

With him went Simon Kenton, the scout. His

spirit was too restless to stay long in one place, and he was anxious to be on the move. He had said to Clark, "Life is too tame for me here, and there are too many people around. I want to be in the woods and sleep under the trees and hear the wolves howl, and feel the creep of Indians around. Better let me go back to Kentucky."

"All right," replied the Colonel. "I want some one to take an account of all that has happened back to Harrodsburg, and you are the man to do it."

"Write it out and give it to me, and you can bet that it will get there, or the Indians will get me on the way."

Clark wrote out an account of the capture of Kaskaskia, and his visit to Cahokia, and everything else he thought worthy of mention, and the next day handed it to the scout, who tucked it in his jacket and shouldering his gun declared he was ready to go with Gibault by way of Vincennes, and then on to Kentucky.

The party set out for Vincennes. Gibault knew the way for he had traveled it often in his ministrations from church to church. But the priest traveled slowly, and was wont to rest more frequently than Kenton thought necessary.

"This is too slow for me," he said one day, "I am going to take a few men and run on ahead

and do some scouting on my own account. If I find anything wrong I will come back and let you know. I love to spy around anyhow."

All that Gibault said could not dissuade Kenton from going on ahead of the party. With him went two others. In true scout fashion they proceeded cautiously along looking for Indians, for they knew well that savage and unfriendly tribes were likely at any time to rise up and murder white men wherever they found them, especially if those white men were Americans and from Kentucky.

Early one morning as Kenton and his companions came over a small hill they saw a camp of Indians. Not many were there it was true, but more than three men desired to attack. Kenton whispered to his companions, "Be still now and do not move, for I see five or six horses feeding not far from the camp and we may as well get them if we can."

The Indians were cooking breakfast, their guns stacked against a tree. They were evidently preparing to depart. Kenton wanted the horses to continue his journey for he was not far from Vincennes, and eagerly watched the savages at their work, all the time edging up to the place where the horses were tethered.

He was a master scout and so were the others

with him. Lying on the ground, with their knives in their mouths, they dragged their guns behind them, making no noise and taking their time.

The Indians ate their meal, the horses stamped the ground to warm themselves in the early morning air. The scouts crawled nearer and nearer to the place where the animals were tethered. In a few moments the three scouts reached the horses and with their knives severed the cords that tied them to the trees.

Then with one terrific yell each scout leaped on the back of a horse, struck him in the side with his heels and rode off through the woods before the astonished Indians could fire their guns or start in pursuit.

In a few minutes the three men were out of sight and turned in their places to see what was behind them. They waited to meet the Indians if they came. Down the trail came the thunder of hoofs, for the savages had several horses left and did not propose to allow anybody to steal horses but themselves.

Kenton raised his rifle with his body turned, and when he fired the foremost Indian fell from his saddle. The others halted and raised their own guns, but just then the two other scouts fired. One horse plunged with a broken leg and his rider fell over his head onto the ground. The

other one dropped his rifle from his hand and yelled with pain of a wound in his shoulder.

"That's right, don't kill 'em," called out Kenton. "Mine isn't hurt much. Only a scratch on his head."

Then the three scouts dug their heels into the sides of their horses and were off, leaving the Indians to limp back to camp and tell the story of their misfortune. But since they were horse thieves themselves they dared not make out a case against the white men.

All day long the three scouts rode through the forest, following the trail to Vincennes. They made as little noise as possible, and the tread of the horses' feet fell lightly on the soft ground. At noon they stopped by a spring and watered their horses and let them eat a little grass. They built a small fire and cooked for themselves, being careful not to let any smoke ascend beyond the tops of the trees.

By dusk they were in sight of the lights of the little village of Vincennes, where a few wooden houses clustered around a miserable stockade fort. It was very different from the splendid city that stands there today.

Kenton said to his men, "I don't know whether the British are there or not, or whether the people are our friends or not. But we must not

take any chances. Up to this time they belong to Hamilton and his gang of scalpers. So we may as well be careful."

"What shall we do with these horses?" asked one of his companions.

"Leave 'em right here in the woods, for we may need 'em again soon," was the reply.

The horses were tied, and the three men proceeded cautiously in the gathering night. Soon they came to the outskirts of the village where they waited patiently until the inhabitants had gone to sleep.

"We may as well sit down and eat what we brought along from our last meal," said Kenton, with the philosophy of the backwoodsman. "I haven't ever found an empty stomach a good thing to carry with you when you've got any fighting to do."

"Do you think we've got a fight on our hands?" asked one of the men.

"You can't always tell beforehand, and it's best to be ready," was the wise answer. "Maybe not tonight, for it looks pretty peaceful over yonder in the village."

They sat for two hours, and until every light was out. Then they proceeded with silent steps to the main street of the village, skulking in the shadows of the houses. Fortunately the night

was dark, and the three men had long since learned to move with the stealth of the wild animal.

From one street they passed to another. There were no guards, no sentinels, no sign of anyone on the lookout for an attack from any source.

"It's a curious kind of fort and town, that never posts a guard. I wonder if they have ever heard of Clark and his men," whispered Kenton.

"I guess they have heard of him, and have made up their minds they are safer without a fight than with one," replied one of the men, in an undertone.

They came to a corral, where some horses had been turned loose for the night.

"Here's where we get some more horses," remarked Kenton, grimly. "If we keep on we can get quite a bunch."

Quietly they opened the corral gate, and taking the ropes that held six horses around the neck, led them outside and closed the gate to prevent the others from stampeding.

"Six is about all we can handle, with the three we already have," explained the scout. "Come on, we have seen enough to know that Clark could take this town by himself, if Hamilton does not get here before him."

The men led the horses along the street, and

out of the town, strangely enough without being accosted by a single voice. "Sound sleepers, these people," said one of the scouts.

They soon reached the place where the other horses had been tied. Mounting those the three men led the other horses behind them and were soon lost in the darkness as they went their way down the trail to Kentucky.

"What are you going to do with these horses?" asked the men of Kenton.

"Send 'em to Clark with my compliments."

"Who's going to take 'em?" was the inquiry.

"One of you, unless we find someone else," replied Kenton.

The men rode on for the night, and camped next day on the banks of the White River. Here they rested and kept as much hidden as they could for they were always in danger of running into a band of hostile savages.

They busied themselves in making a raft upon which they could place their guns and provisions, while the horses would swim over. In the afternoon late, the raft was ready, and on it everything was loaded that the men had. Embarking carefully they pulled the horses into the water, who swam easily, and the party headed downstream and across. There was no chance of going directly over the river.

A few hundred yards and they came to a bend in the river, and to their amazement a camp of Indians was in view.

"Let go the horses and head the raft back to the shore," ordered Kenton at once. Quickly the horses were turned adrift, and the three men bent to their poles to keep their raft from going into the camp of the savages who had already caught sight of them.

The horses swam straight away and directly for the Indians who were standing on the bank and waving their hands. As the animals climbed up the bank the ropes were caught and all nine of the horses were led away, while Kenton and his men were making desperate efforts to gain the shore.

"That's hard luck, to lose those beasts that way, after we had so much trouble to catch 'em," remarked Kenton, with a smile.

"We caught 'em just about as easy as we lost 'em," was the reply. "If those devils don't catch us we will be lucky."

By this time the raft had struck the bank, and the men climbed out, grabbing their guns and packs and putting off into the bushes. The Indians had seen them and launching their canoes shot across the stream with incredible swiftness. With long, swift strokes they forced their frail

craft over the river until within a few yards of the place where Kenton and his men had landed. But the scouts had no idea of provoking battle with five or six times their number, and were already disappearing in the forest.

After going about a mile they halted. No sign or sound of the savages came to their eyes or ears. "I guess they stopped before they went far," said Kenton, "for an Indian don't want to be caught in an ambush, and he is afraid of an enemy he cannot see."

In fact the Indians had turned back, leaving the fugitives alone, and content with their capture of the horses.

Kenton and his men traveled on foot for many days and finally reached Kentucky in safety. He proceeded at once to Harrodsburg and gave the precious dispatches which the Colonel had entrusted to him, safely into the hands of the Commander of that post.

While all this was going on, Father Gibault and his party were traveling slowly toward Vincennes. The Frenchmen were never in a hurry, and knowing every step of the way, and not afraid of the Indians, they took their time.

They arrived several days after the night visit of Kenton and their first question was if any one had seen the three scouts who had come on ahead.

"Not a soul has visited the place. A band of prowling Indians broke into the corral and carried off six of our horses, a few nights ago, but we dared not stop them for fear of our lives. We heard them but it was too late," was all the information the people had.

Father Gibault, knowing something of the habits of Kenton and his men, had his doubts about the Indians stealing the horses but he kept his own counsel.

The good priest led the people to the church and as was his custom held divine worship. Then he visited the sick of the village and then the old and infirm. Then he called the people together at the fort and told them all about Clark and the capture of Kaskaskia, and the treaty at Cahokia.

The good father was plied with many questions about the Americans.

"And are the Long Knives so terrible, that they are fiercer than the savages themselves?" the people demanded.

"They are not fierce to their friends, though they may be to their enemies," discreetly replied the priest.

"We hear they closed the church, and shut up all the French in their houses, and took all their food away from them."

"You have heard a lot of nonsense," was the

reply. "They have not disturbed the church, and affairs go on as they always did."

"But why should we change to the American flag?" was the eager question.

"Because it is your country, and your flag. You were all born here, and your children were born here, and the British do nothing but oppress you. Have you heard nothing of the great war that is going on for the independence of these colonies?"

The people confessed that they had heard little and that was what the British officers who had come from time to time to Vincennes had told them. Their ideas of the causes of the war were vague and their knowledge of the situation was much confused.

Gibault then explained to them about the oppression of the King of England upon the colonies, about the unjust taxes and the various laws that had been passed by Parliament to the hurt of the American people. He told them of the growth of the colonies along the Atlantic seaboard, and how this country was going to be a great nation some day, and needed to have its own rulers and make its own laws.

"And last but not least," concluded the priest, "France has made an alliance with the colonies to help them fight the British in this war for in-

dependence. We are Frenchmen and why should we not go with France in her union with America?"

The inhabitants quickly became enthusiastic for the cause of the Long Knives, and for America. Marching in a body to the little wooden church, they all knelt down and solemnly swore allegiance to the American flag and declared they threw in their lot with France and America and were done with the English. Then the old and perfectly worthless fort, which was named Fort Sackville, was entered by the citizens and the British flag was taken down, wrapped around a large stone and thrown in the river. The American flag was raised in its place to the astonishment of the Indians, who looked on in surprise not knowing and not caring anything about this change of flags from one design to another.

All this happened very peaceably because there was no British garrison there at the time. The Governor had left the village some time before the arrival of Father Gibault, and withdrawn what few British troops he had with him.

The citizens now felt they had the Americans back of them and were no longer afraid of the British or of the savages. They assumed a bold air toward the few Indians who came to the village, attracted by the arrival of the French mes-

sengers from Kaskaskia. Father Gibault said to them:

"The old father, the King of France, has come to life again and is angry with his children for fighting with the British. He will punish them quickly unless they make peace with the Americans who are his brothers. The English are too weak now to fight any longer, but the French and the Long Knives are strong, and can punish the British and all the Indians who make treaties with them."

The Indians began to think seriously. There was one chief called the "Big Gate" whose tribe held possession of the lower part of the Wabash River, who looked on and listened with some concern.

"Do you say that the French father has come to life again?" he asked of Gibault.

"Yes, he has come to life again, and is calling for his children along the Wabash. You were faithful to him long ago, as was your father, 'Old Tobacco,' and he calls you now to help drive the British back across the great water and leave all this land to you and to the Americans."

The Big Gate was fond of Father Gibault, and had been with him often, and listened to his preachings and to his counsels. When he heard all that the priest had to say, he turned away, lost

in wonder but keeping his own thoughts to himself.

In a few days Gibault with his party went back to Kaskaskia, accompanied by several of the citizens of Vincennes. It is needless to say that Clark was rejoiced at the reports the priest brought him of the impression that was made upon the people he had visited.

The next day the Colonel sent for Captain Helm. "I have few men to spare, but some one must go to Vincennes and occupy that place, and hold the people to their allegiance. I can give you one or two men, and with them you must do your best."

Helm saluted the Colonel, and declared that if he could take two friends of his it would be company and that was all. "So far as defence is concerned, three men are as good as a dozen if the British come down from Detroit to attack us," said he to Clark.

"You are a good soldier and a brave man. Go on and hold Vincennes until I can get there. If Hamilton captures you, you may have a good time as his prisoner or you may lose your scalp," was the smiling reply of his commander.

Helm set out the next day, taking his two companions with him. In due time they reached Vincennes, and entered the city with some degree

of ceremony. "Here are our letters from Colonel Clark giving us authority to take charge here. Show us your fort and then we will decide what to do." Accordingly, the people welcomed Helm and his companions who began their duties as officers of the American forces in command of that place.

Near the town was a tribe of Indians known as the Piankeshaws. Their chief was the Big Gate of whom we have already spoken. He was so influential with the other tribes that his consent was necessary for anything to be done among the Indians of the lower Wabash.

He was a solemn Indian, of great dignity, and with but little to say, but when he had made up his mind or given his word he could act with considerable vigor. To him Helm had a letter from Clark, for the Colonel was anxious to secure the friendship of the Big Gate.

Sending a few of the inhabitants over to the camp of the Piankeshaws, he invited him to come to Vincennes to get the letter. The Big Gate came in all his finery and dignity and Helm read him the message, offering him the friendship and protection of the Americans, and telling him the British were weak and could no longer be their strong friends.

The Big Gate listened in silence, and after awhile spoke up:

"I have heard from Father Gibault of the Big Chief of the Long Knives. I am glad to see one of his chiefs here near my people. It was at Vincennes that I made a treaty with the British, but I have never loved them. They are not like the French who laugh and take us by the hand. They scowl and use harsh words. I think I should like the Long Knife to be my brother and I will listen to what he says in his letter. But it will take several days for me to find out what my wise men say. I will let the chief know."

The Big Gate bowed with great solemnity. Helm bowed in return. The Indian drew his long cloak around him, and moved off with courtly dignity. Helm and his companions stood up until the procession filed away. Such was the manner of the Indians when they desired to be impressive.

In a few days, Helm was invited to return the visit of the Big Gate and go to the village of the Piankeshaws. There he went with as much dignity as he could muster, though as a soldier he was not much inclined to ceremony.

On his arrival, he found the Big Gate dressed in all his finery, surrounded by his braves and seated at a council fire peacefully smoking.

Helm and his companions sat down in silence and for several hours not a word was spoken. The Indians smoked and looked in the fire and the white men did the same.

Then the Big Gate arose and asked Helm to tell them all about the war between the Americans and the British. This Helm proceeded to do, putting the Americans in the best light he could. He then told him about Clark and his soldiers and how they had captured Kaskaskia, and made a treaty at Cahokia, and how the Great Father in Virginia wanted all his Indian children to help him drive the British away.

While Helm was talking the Big Gate was thoughtful, while the other Indians grunted and nodded their heads in approval. When Helm finished there was silence for a long time and then the chief arose from his seat and began his speech.

"We have considered the case, and have heard why the British have been on the warpath for the Long Knives. They have told us many things about our brothers, but we now know they were lies. This is all our country, we speak the language of one another. This is our forest, these are our mountains, these are our rivers. Let the British go to their Father and let us alone. The sky has been dark before, but now it is bright because the Big Chief of the Long Knives has

sent us messages of peace. We will spill no more blood of our brothers. We will take them all by the hand."

Then in true Indian fashion the Big Gate laid aside his dignity and his solemnity. Throwing off his robe of skins richly embroidered with quills, and rattling with the teeth of animals, he cleared himself of most of his clothing. Jumping up he beat his breast, and declared he was a warrior for the Big Chief, and calling on the others to dance, he led them in a wild procession around the council fire, chanting the rude melody of the forest.

While this was going on at Vincennes, Clark over at Kaskaskia was having other troubles. He was having a hard time paying his soldiers. They were out of money, and there was no way to buy food and ammunition, and the Colonel was not willing to take it from the stores of the merchants. Some of his soldiers were threatening to return to Virginia for their term of enlistment was expiring, and they were homesick for their families and friends. Clark was in great perplexity, and hardly knew what to do. He sat in his room in deep concern.

One of his soldiers brought word that a visitor had arrived and wished to see him. "Show him in," said the Colonel, without much interest.

There entered a well dressed and prosperous looking man, who announced himself, "I am Francis Vigo, and my home is at St. Louis down the river. I am a merchant, and have heard of your exploits. We are friends of the Americans in our little trading post, Spanish though it be, and I have come over to see you."

Clark was always cordial and gracious to strangers and arose to greet his visitor. After inquiring about St. Louis and explaining the situation at Kaskaskia, he found Vigo much interested in his plans.

"And do you intend to hold all this territory for your United Colonies?" asked the Spaniard.

"I do. The American flag has come here to stay. When this war is over I intend for all this territory to be a part of my country. That is what I am here for."

"Good," said the trader, who had no love for the British. "But can you do so with this small body of men?"

"Ah, that is now my perplexity. Some of them are already tired of the inactivity of the service. I cannot be always on the march nor can I conquer a village every day. Besides that, our money is exhausted and there comes no word from Virginia."

"If they go home, what then?" was the question.

"I am expecting to hear that Hamilton is moving against Vincennes. I hear that he is having councils with the Indians, giving them presents, and offering bounties for the scalps they may bring in. I have only three men at Vincennes, Helm and two others, and the militia there is weak. If Hamilton gets to Vincennes and my troops are unpaid and mutinous then this country is lost again. If he takes Vincennes, which he can easily do, I have got to take it from him. And that I am going to do if I have to take it by myself with these bare hands," said Clark, with a great deal of energy.

The visitor's face flushed with admiration. "You are a brave young man, and deserve to succeed."

After awhile the visitor withdrew and betook himself to his lodgings. The next day he reappeared at Clark's house and asked for him. Again he was admitted as cordially as before.

"I wish to have a part in the conquest of this territory for America and I am here to offer you all the money you need to pay off the troops. I have a partner in St. Louis who should feel as I do. How much do you need?" he said to the Colonel.

Clark's face showed his surprise and his delight. Taking a paper from his pocket he explained to the merchant that he owed his men the equivalent of twelve thousand dollars.

"You shall have it, and all in gold," were the prompt words. "I leave today for St. Louis, but before the week is out my messenger will be here with the money."

Clark seized the Spanish merchant by the hand, and there was moisture in his eyes as he spoke. "I do not know whether my country will ever pay you, or pay me, or whether they will ever be able to pay, but you will always know you had your share in this great enterprise. Without your aid I could not pay my soldiers, and could not maintain them in this country. Without my soldiers I could not conquer Hamilton. Sir, you have done a great service."

Vigo replied quite as cordially: "Spain has never had any reason to love England, but has every reason to love this country to whose discoverer she was the first to lend her aid and encouragement. I am glad to do my part."

Clark was thoughtful for a moment, and turning to his visitor, said to him, "I have a young lad among my troops who should see a little more of the world than can be seen here in Kaskaskia. Would you mind taking him to St.

Louis and letting him see your town and return with your messenger?"

"I shall be very glad to do that, and you may send the lad to me tomorrow morning, for I shall be on my way by noon."

And with that the two men shook hands and separated.

Among those who had followed Clark on his long journey from the Falls of the Ohio to Kaskaskia was a young Irish soldier hardly more than seventeen years of age, who for lack of a better name we will call Tim. He was so slender that he hardly weighed more than a hundred pounds, and often the big men of the company amused themselves by holding him up and tossing him from one to another. Everybody loved him, for he was good-natured and brave, and as good a shot as any Long Knife in the company. He it was that was lifted over the gate of the fort, the night that Clark entered Kaskaskia.

Since their occupancy of the town, a rude drum had been found and it was Tim's duty to act as drummer boy, whenever the Colonel called out the men to be drilled. When on the march the men needed no drum, nor would they have allowed such noise if they had one.

Clark had become fond of the lad, and had often watched him with the men and wondered

how it happened that he had come with them. The boy loved Clark with all his soul. He asked no greater privilege than to sit near him and hear him talk, or go with him on his rounds of the village, or be sent upon any errand in his service. His adoration for his commander was so great, that he would not allow any of the men to complain of hardship, or say anything about the Colonel except in terms of the utmost respect.

It was Tim that Clark had in mind to go to St. Louis with Vigo. When sent for, the boy came bounding into the house where Clark had his quarters.

"Tim, I want you to go on an errand to St. Louis with a gentleman named Vigo, who will take care of you there and send you back with a messenger bringing home a valuable package. Would you like to go?"

"How long will I be gone, sir, and are you quite sure I am to return? I shall not like to leave—the men—long." The boy wanted to say leave the Colonel, but dared not show his feelings too plainly.

"You will be gone probably for a week, but it will be something for you to do and there will be something for you to see. Besides that you may have a chance to be of service to me."

"Then I am ready to leave at a moment's notice. Where shall I find Mr. Vigo?"

Clark gave the boy other directions and a few parting words and let him go his way for the night. The next day at noon Tim and Vigo set out on the trail, leading up the Mississippi to the village of St. Louis. On the way Tim learned a good deal about the young settlement of the French at St. Louis, for he was of an inquiring mind and Vigo was a willing talker.

"Our town is only fourteen years old now," said he to the lad. "I remember hearing one of the men who helped pole a boat up the river from Fort de Chartres in the middle of the winter, tell how thirty of them landed and dragged their boat up on the beach, and climbed through a gully up to a bluff where a lad of thirteen years saw some trees which had been marked for their guidance, and how the men said those trees were probably the ones they were looking for and that here they were going to settle and build a town."

"What were the men after and why leave New Orleans and all the towns further down and come way up here to live?" asked Tim.

"Furs, my boy, furs. These woods are full of animals that have on their bodies skins that bring great prices across the Atlantic Ocean, and St. Louis, after fourteen years, has become the center

of the fur trade of all this section. A few hundred of us live there but we trade with twenty-eight nations of Indians all around the Great Lakes and far into the West. I have seen a thousand Indians bringing packs into St. Louis."

"What people live in St. Louis? It is a French name, but you said something about a Spanish Governor."

"Oh, yes, we were at first a French town, under the Governor of New Orleans, when France owned all the territory along the Mississippi, but a few years ago France gave all this land to the King of Spain, and we now have a Spanish Governor, though most of the people living there are French."

"Are you not afraid of so many Indians coming to trade with you?"

"Oh, no. The Indians who come to trade are hunters and trappers and not warriors. They range all over the forests in the winter when the fur is the finest and the animals most readily captured. They shoot and trap bear, deer, lynx, fox, beaver, and all sorts of animals, dry the skins and bring them to us to exchange for food and clothing, guns and ammunition, jewelry, blankets, and all kinds of things that savages like. Besides the Indians there are many French rang-

ers through the country, bringing in fur for the trade."

"Is that the business you are engaged in?" inquired the boy.

"Yes, I have a partner named Gosti; and the Governor at St. Louis, whose name is Leyba, is in business with us also. We are bankers also. Once a year we have a large fleet of flat bottomed boats that go down the river carrying all the skins we have bought. These we sell along the river and as far down as New Orleans. Then we buy a stock of goods and bring it overland or back by boats as we find it convenient."

Thus the boy and the merchant talked, the boy telling the story of his life in Kentucky, of his early hardships, of the Indians who came in peace and those who came in war, of how he followed the company that went out to join Colonel Clark and the Virginians, and how they traversed the wilderness and came to Kaskaskia.

By day they followed the trail, well known and safe along the river, for Vigo and his friends were well known to all the tribes. Occasionally they passed a few savages on horseback riding into some village of the French for supplies, but they were peaceable for there was no warfare between the Indians and the French or Spaniards.

By night the party, for there were several

others along, camped under the trees by the side of a spring, tethering their horses to the trees and sleeping under the open sky. It was a rare experience for the boy to be thrown with a man who could tell him so much as this Spanish merchant.

On the third day they came to the landing across from the village and were ferried over by the boatman into the busy little fur-trading town, which already had its streets and stores and warehouses, a church, a Governor's house, and a fort. As Tim walked with Vigo along the main street that led down to the river bluff he could not foresee the great buildings, enormous stores, and handsome residences that one day would make St. Louis one of the great cities of the Middle West.

Now he saw only wooden houses bordering unpaved streets that were dusty with much travel, an occasional warehouse from which came the stale smell of the skins of animals, many wagons coming and going to adjoining farms and settlements, men and women in the rough clothes of the frontier and a few Indians squatting under a tree greedily devouring something they had gotten from a store in exchange for an otter skin. The boy was interested but not impressed. It was all too much like what he had seen elsewhere. He had never been beyond Kentucky

before, nor seen any place that had a thousand people in it.

Vigo took the boy home with him and kept him overnight. The merchant lived in one of the best houses in the village and was much respected by the people. The next day he and Tim went together to his place of business where the boy had a chance to see the partner of his friend, and also the big warehouse where the stores were kept for sale, and the skins were packed for carrying down the river, or by trail to the settlements east.

In a little office to one side Vigo and his partner Gosti sat in conversation. Tim was just outside watching some trading going on with a Frenchman from the interior who wanted ammunition and supplies for his winter expedition. His ear caught the words, "and you promised all that money to Colonel Clark? Why, Vigo, you will never get it back. It was a foolish thing to do, I say. You have only that much money here."

"Yes, I have more than that in gold, stored here in our bank, which I have kept from time to time in case we needed it. I can do what I will with my own, can I not?"

"But it is an agreement that we both should keep that much money. I have that much, too, and so has Leyba. If you give yours away, and anything happens to the business you will not be

able to help. You break your agreement with us."

At that moment another man came in the big store, looked around for a moment and spoke cordially to several persons who had entered. They showed him great respect, holding their hats or caps in their hands and replying deferentially to all his enquiries. The man was Don Leyba, the Spanish Lieutenant-Governor of St. Louis. He was small in size, with dark hair and eyes and of a very excitable disposition.

Don Leyba entered the office and began to speak in Spanish to his partners in business. Tim could not understand a word they said but judged by their manner that Clark and the money was the subject under discussion. Looking in the door he saw Gosti and Don Leyba gesticulating wildly and Vigo protesting as vigorously. It was the way of Spaniards to be vehement.

Tim boldly entered the room without being invited. Then in a clear voice, which trembled slightly from embarrassment and some fear, he spoke out: "Sirs, I do not know what you are discussing, but if it is about Colonel Clark you are talking, I want to say that he is as brave and honest a man as there is in the world, and I know a whole lot more about him than you do, for I

have been with him all the way from Kentucky to Kaskaskia."

Don Leyba looked at the lad, whose face was now flushed with excitement, and enquired in English, "Who is this boy?"

Vigo told him of Clark's request and of how the boy had come with him from Kaskaskia, and that his name was Tim, or at least that was what Clark called him. Don Leyba turned to the lad and spoke in his excitable way:

"I know your Colonel Clark very well. I have been to Kaskaskia and spent several evenings with him. He is a fine soldier and has done a great thing in capturing those French towns from the English. I hope he will hold them against that miserable fellow Hamilton."

"Then why not lend him the money to pay his soldiers, and let them pay their debts, so that the storekeepers will be satisfied? We cannot live off the people. I owe some money myself and I need some things I now have no money to buy. Some of the men are threatening to go home unless they get their pay, and then Clark will not have enough left to march against Vincennes, and Hamilton will keep all this country for the British, which we hope to add to our country when peace is made."

The boy spoke breathlessly and in deep earn-

est. Don Leyba and his companions remembered the long grievance that Spain had against England, from the days of the Armada down to recent days in America.

"Twelve thousand dollars is a lot of money, Vigo, for you to lend, and I doubt if you will ever get it back," said Don Leyba. "I admire Clark and his courage but business is business and my advice is against it, but you can do what you will with your own money so far as I am concerned. Lend it to Clark, for the cause is a good one, but I think you are giving it to him."

Vigo's enthusiasm had considerably abated by this time, and he was on the point of writing to Clark that his promise must be withdrawn, and letting the boy go back with a note of apology instead of a package of gold coin. The boy saw his irresolution on his face, and there came to him the resolve to help his Colonel if he could. Turning to Vigo, he said with great earnestness:

"Mr. Vigo, Colonel Clark has come from a land where Indians have been sent to murder men, women and children, and take their scalps to Detroit. I know this is true for my own father was murdered in his field and his body thrown into the burning cabin from which my mother and I fled. I was not the only child for there was a baby sister. We escaped into the woods

in the dead of winter, my mother carrying the baby in her arms, and hid for one long day and one long night, without food and with little clothing. What we had on we used to wrap up the baby. When we reached the little fort where a few soldiers kept guard over our frightened neighbors, my mother was too weak to even enter the door. She died that night, and a neighbor now has the baby to keep for me until I get back. That was two years ago. I made up my mind to become a soldier and do my part to put an end to this war. I slipped away from the fort one day and joined some soldiers who were going somewhere, I did not care. We joined Colonel Clark and his Virginians and you know the rest. I should be sorry for him to go back without doing what he came for."

There was silence in the office for awhile. Don Leyba again spoke up: "This war is an awful affair, especially where Indians are concerned. Hamilton may not be as guilty as he is reported, but when he puts Indians on the warpath he ought to know what to expect."

"What kind of man is your Colonel?" asked Vigo.

"As gentle and kindhearted as he is brave, sir," replied the boy. "I saw him cry when an old priest was begging him not to let his men butcher

the people of Kaskaskia, or turn them in the wilderness. I saw him carry a sick Indian child in his arms to his own house and keep him there for days until he was well. I saw him stop an Indian chief who was about to dash out the brains of two of his braves. I have seen him look like he was angry but it was all for effect. He is like those knights my mother read me about back in Kentucky."

Tim stopped for there were tears in his eyes, and a tremble in his voice. Gosti arose and put his hand on the boy's shoulder, while Don Leyba looked out of the door and said nothing.

Vigo's face showed once more his firmness to stand by his promise. "Boy, you are a good soldier, and if all the Long Knives are like you, Clark could conquer the whole of Canada. You shall carry the money back with you as I said you should."

The next day a boat was loaded with provisions and arms and manned by lusty oarsmen, who directed its course down the river. There was a trusty messenger who sat close by a heavy box of whose contents no one of those on the boat knew anything except the messenger himself and the Irish lad who had unburdened his heart to a stranger.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE HAIR BUYER AT DETROIT

IT is quite time we turn our attention to Henry Hamilton, the Lieutenant-Governor of Detroit, who was the British Commander of all the territory that Clark was trying to conquer and hold for America against the time when peace should be declared.

At this time, Detroit was a village of three hundred inhabitants living in ordinary wooden houses, much like all the frontier towns of that period. There was a Catholic church, but no other public building. The entire town was surrounded by a palisade for protection against the Indians, but since all the tribes in the neighborhood had been brought over to the English, the palisade was much neglected.

Here was stationed Henry Hamilton, whom history has given a bad name. It was believed that he allowed his Indian allies to make forays into white settlements along the Ohio and across the border for the purpose of murder, and that he paid for scalps regardless of whether they were

torn from the heads of men, women, or children, young or old. It is a fact that he wrote many reports to his superior officer, the Governor of Canada, in which he speaks of the Indians bringing in scalps, though he never speaks of paying for them. It was currently believed at the time that some bounty or gratuity was given to each bearer of the bloody trophies.

History is frank to admit that if Hamilton deserved the name of the "Hair Buyer," it was won without any direction or sanction of the mother country. In all wars there are to be found men who are inhuman and cruel, and who do many things under the pretence of war that are revolting to the better feelings of the world. Let us remember that after all it was not the British soldier, nor the British people, who wanted the War of the Revolution, but rather the British king, George III, whose obstinacy and oppressive laws drove the colonists into rebellion. The British people at large sympathized with the colonists, and many British statesmen thought they were right in their demands. Therefore, let us not lay the cruelties of Hamilton at any door but his own, nor accuse any one of barbarity except himself, even if he deserved it.

Hamilton had very few soldiers at Detroit. He depended largely on his Indian allies and was

always having councils with them, distributing presents and making speeches to win over their friendship. Three months before Clark had set out on his journey down the Ohio, Hamilton held a great council of the Indians around the Great Lakes. There were over sixteen hundred savages present, Ottawas, Chippewas, Wyandots, Delawares, Shawanese, Miamis, Mohawks, and Senecas.

The council lasted several days. There was a great deal of speech-making, much eating and drinking and dancing. Many presents were distributed among the Indians such as guns, knives, axes, hatchets, colored cloth, medals, bits of jewelry, and clothes. Hamilton, dressed in the costume of an Indian, bedecked with paint and feathers, chanting the savage songs of the forest and dancing around the council fires, assumed the manners and acted the part of the red men he was trying to conciliate.

All day long and far into the night the fires burned, the rude drums and the weird songs gave out their monotonous sounds, the swaying bodies moved back and forth, while the savages prepared for the council which was to follow.

The General made talks to his Indian allies in which he urged them to remain firm in their friendship with the British and to make warfare

upon their enemies. This suited the Indians exactly. Nothing pleased them more than to get presents and go on the warpath, but their friendship was as changeable as the wind, and no one knew it better than the Lieutenant-Governor himself.

The winter passed and spring came, and then the summer. In the meantime, in July, Clark had taken Kaskaskia and Cahokia, but they were six hundred miles or more away from Detroit and news traveled slowly. In August, a messenger rode into Detroit and asked to see the Commander. The man was from far down the country and was bearing news he had gotten from others still farther down. The Governor received him in his house.

"I bring you word that a band of rebels from Virginia have come overland this spring, about three hundred in number I hear, and in July captured Kaskaskia and Cahokia, and all the people there have taken the oath of allegiance to the American flag."

"What?" cried the Commander. "Rebels in this territory? They must be mad to trust themselves among my Indian allies. We shall have them captured at once. There will be more scalps on the palisades, and not so far to go after them."

"Not so fast, sir," replied the man. "I hear

that at Cahokia their colonel, a man named Clark, had a great council and made a treaty with all the Indians along the Mississippi. They say he is a young, but a very able leader. Also the French have turned against the English since France has declared for the colonies."

Hamilton was perplexed at this turn of affairs. It was more serious than he had thought. "I must send someone to see the Wabash Indians, and the Miamis to keep them in line, and inform the Governor at Canada about all this."

"That is not all, sir," said the messenger. "I was also informed that a priest named Gibault, was about to set out for Vincennes, to see the people there and persuade them to join the Americans, which will be easy to do, since the British post has been removed from that place and Gibault has much influence over the people."

"Vincennes too?" exclaimed Hamilton. "That means all this territory to the south to those rascally rebels. Well, we have over a thousand Indian allies and if we can keep them true to their promise it will be a lively war."

Hamilton dismissed the messenger and then wrote the full particulars to Governor Haldimand, in command at Quebec. In this letter he told Haldimand that it was his opinion that the rebels were few in number and that their con-

quests had been greatly exaggerated, but that it would be well for him and his Indians to go at once to Vincennes and dislodge the intruders so as to prevent others coming on and making matters worse. Little did the General know what kind of men he was opposing in his expedition down the Wabash.

The General did not hesitate to spread the news of his intention to move against Vincennes. To all the chiefs who came into the village he was cordial and friendly, and sent them away with presents.

A body of Shawanese came trooping in one day, still painted as from the warpath. The chief came into the room where Hamilton had his office. The savage had his war belt in his hand, to which was dangling a dozen dried scalps to which the clotted blood was still adhering.

"White men, scalps," said the chief, proudly. "Over across the big river. My braves burnt houses and killed men. You give us presents and we bring you scalps."

Hamilton looked with disgust at the awful sight and his better nature rose against the butchery. What helpless people were surprised in the night and their cabins burned, what tortures endured, what murders committed, and for what

reason? It was in his mind then and there to put this gloating savage in irons and give no more presents if that was what they thought his gifts were for. He knit his brow and turned to his officers sitting with him to conceal the loathing he felt for what he saw of the savage nature.

"Take the things outside. I shall send you word what to do with them," and he ordered the chief from the room, an order the savage obeyed with some reluctance.

"This is horrible, horrible," said he.

"Yes, but it is war, and an Indian knows no other kind of war. It is all one with him whether he murders men, or women, or children. Last spring I saw a Miami warrior in a fit of passion against a Mohawk woman, dash her brains out with his tomahawk and then swing her child over his shoulder and crush its body on a rock," was the reply of one of his officers.

"What happened to him?" was asked by another.

"The Mohawks rose in wrath, demanded the warrior of the Miamis and then slowly roasted him alive. At least, that is what I heard afterwards."

"How many scalps did that Indian have?" asked the General.

"Probably twelve or more, and some of them looked like the hair of women."

"That makes more than a hundred that I have had to see in the past six months. I wish to heaven I had seen the last of them," and the General turned to other matters.

But the officers knew too well the necessity of keeping the Indians in good humor. One of them left the room and went with the savage to the storehouse where more "presents" were given him to distribute to the braves who were carrying on the war in the way they thought would please the man who had danced with them around their council fires and told them to go on the warpath for their English father who lived beyond the great water.

A week later, Hamilton sat in conference with his officers. There were Captain Lernoult and Lieutenant Shourd and others. The talk was about the disquieting rumors of the rebels who, it was reported by other messengers, had already taken Vincennes.

"In fact," said Hamilton, "I have been informed by Beaubien, who has arrived from the agency at the head of the Maumee River, that a fellow, named Clark, was at Vincennes with eighty men and that the French received him well."

"A Huron, from Sandusky, is reported to have said that he heard the rebels were headed for Detroit itself, and that they were eight hundred strong, counting their Indian allies," said Lernoult.

To all this Shourd added the information that he had received a letter from an agent among the Wabash Indians that the rebels were called Long Knives by the savages, because they could shoot with unerring accuracy, and were as bloody in murder as any tribe of Indians.

"Heaven help us, if such be true," said Hamilton, uneasily. "If these be men from Virginia and Kentucky, where the savage devils have wrought such havoc on the border villages, they will make short work of the three hundred people in this defenceless town. But I think these are mere rumors after all."

"I am tired of this wilderness, and its eternal perils," remarked another officer. "Here we have a handful of soldiers, hardly a hundred, and out yonder in the woods are thousands of bloody savages that we hold as allies by the meanest sort of trickery. We give them guns and powder, and let them get whiskey, and buy them with cheap jewelry, and turn them loose upon white men with as good English blood as ours, all on account of a war that I don't believe in. As for

me, I live in daily terror of hearing a war whoop directed against us, and of seeing a scalping knife over my own head."

"Yes, indeed!" added Shourd. "And as for comforts, we freeze here all winter, with the snow banked around the huts so that we can hardly get out, and in the summer are eaten alive by mosquitoes. I should like to see some service where men fight men, and not where Indians lie in ambush or sneak up on you by night."

"The war will soon be over, I think," said Hamilton, quietly, "and if I am any prophet these Americans will get what they are fighting for. My hope is that England can keep Canada and all this territory down to the Ohio River when it comes to making some treaty of peace."

"Not if Clark and those rebels, as you call them, have their way. We may all be prisoners of war and Detroit may be in their hands before any treaty of peace is signed," replied Shourd.

"Well, it may be that if Clark and his Long Knives do what you say they are accused of, all our scalps may be hanging to their belts before long. Sometimes I think that living in contact with savages makes one about as bloodthirsty as they are. At all events we must do what we are

expected to do to meet these marauders and save Vincennes if we can," said Hamilton, finally.

Then they began to discuss the necessary preparations for an expedition against Clark who they supposed was at Vincennes.

"It is six hundred miles from here," said one of the officers, "and not easy going by any means. Fortunately all the tribes along the route are in our pay, or were the last time I heard from them."

Hamilton then unfolded his plan. "We will need to build boats to carry the men and provisions down the Detroit River and up the Maumee River to its headwaters, then a portage across the country and down the Wabash River. It will be water travel most of the way, and we should arrive before the worst of the winter sets in."

"When should we be ready to start?"

"If we can get our boats made and stores packed we should set out about the first of October."

The conference broke up and each man set about his task of getting ready for the voyage and the march. The General found fifteen fair-sized boats available for carrying provisions. These he ordered made ready for his undertaking. For many days there was baking of biscuit,

drying of meat, collecting of guns and ammunition, all of which were stored in bags or barrels and placed on board the vessels. At the same time the militia companies were drafted and the soldiers enrolled for service. There was much activity among the people of the village and no little excitement at the adventure that was before them.

The Indians looked on in concern for they wished to join the expedition. Delegations from the Ottawas, the Chippewas, and the Pottawattamies came to Hamilton, and said: "Hold a war council and a war dance, and we will whet our scalping knives for you against the Long Knives as you call them."

Hamilton could do little else than as his savage allies requested. The council was held in the open square of Detroit, around a big fire. All the chiefs and braves came in paint and feathers, with tomahawks in their belts. Hamilton, and Lernoult, and several officers were there and sang the war songs and danced the war dance in true Indian fashion. Whole oxen were roasted on the coals, bread was cooked, and the savages feasted and drank and boasted of what they would do to their enemies once they found them in reach.

A big Ottawa chief swung his tomahawk

around his head, danced the rude steps of the savage war dance, and chanted the death song of his tribe. "The sun sets in blood this night, but where my tomahawk falls the ground shall be redder than the sunset. The wolf howls in the forest but where my footsteps go the cries of those I strike shall drown the howl of the wolf and the bear and the roar of the mountain lion. The birds will not sing, nor the corn grow, nor the waters run sweet after me. I shall drink the blood and eat the flesh of those I hate," and while the drums beat and the braves chanted in unison the weird and cruel songs of the forest, the big chief leaped and danced until he fell exhausted on the ground.

Hamilton turned away, weary of this boasting and savagery. "I place little faith in all this pretence of bravery. It may be our own scalps they will take if once they turn against us. But we will take them along, for Clark probably has as wild a set on his side as we have on ours."

"They are peaceable enough so long as they are our friends. I have been alone in their villages for days and nights at a time and slept securely," said Lernoult. "I would rather have them for us than against us."

"I shall leave you in charge of Detroit," said

the General. "I have told the Indians you are to be their father while I am away."

"And what if they are unruly children?" inquired Lernoult, with a smile.

"Then I may find your scalp hanging on the palisade when I return," replied Hamilton, grimly.

Early in October the boats were ready and loaded. Less than two hundred British and French soldiers, and about seventy well chosen Indians constituted the party that were prepared to accompany the flotilla.

On the day of departure, a Jesuit missionary, named Pierre Potier, called all the French soldiers and the Indians together on Detroit common and gave them the blessings of the Catholic church. He reminded them of their oath of allegiance to the British flag, and admonished them to be brave soldiers. To the Indians he gave a priestly warning to be merciful to all prisoners and to shed no blood where it was not necessary, and above all things to spare women, children, and old men from the tomahawk and the scalping knife. The French soldiers crossed themselves and the Indians grunted, according to their fashion.

While all this was going on, Captain Helm was peacefully, but anxiously, holding Vin-

cennes. He knew that he could not hold it long if any considerable force should move against him. He advised Clark, by a messenger, to send a body of troops against the British agent at a town called Wea, up the Wabash River.

The agent's name was DeCeleron. He was a Frenchman, but very much under the influence of Hamilton. He it was whose councils were keeping the Wabash Indians from joining the Americans as other tribes along the Ohio and the lower Wabash had been doing.

When Clark received the message of Captain Helm, he resolved to capture DeCeleron. He wished to surprise him at the Wea village, and take him and all the stores, for he supposed that by this time Hamilton knew of the presence of the Americans in the territory.

About the time that the officers at Detroit were first informed of the occupation of Kaskaskia, and the coming of "the rebels" across the Ohio, Clark sent eighty men over to Vincennes to add to about twenty from that place, with orders to Helm to "go after the agent at Wea and get him and take him off."

Helm set out with alacrity and delight. He took his men by water up the Wabash River sending some Indian scouts on ahead.

"If the Hair Buyer comes our way he may

have a fight on his hands before he gets to Vincennes," remarked he to Lieutenant Bayley, one of the officers.

"He is probably coming, and may be on the way now. I would be glad to meet him, so long as these one hundred men are with us," replied Bayley.

The flotilla went up the Wabash slowly, day after day, and no sign of Hamilton or the British. He was conferring with his officers and making treaties with the Indians. Occasionally a canoe passed going down the river, but it was filled with friendly Indians, or at least with those who regarded the Americans with indifference. One day, however, at a bend of the river, Helm saw a party of Indians on the banks. "Wabash!" grunted one of the Piankeshaws. "Know him by paint. Live up river."

Hardly had the party been sighted before the savages disappeared in the woods. "I think they are war scouts of the Wabash and Miamis. They will take word of our coming to DeCeleron. I hope they say we are few in number so that he will show some fight," said Bayley.

It was as Bayley thought. The Indians mounted their ponies, rode furiously up the trail to the village of the Wabash where DeCeleron had his headquarters. They told him that many

boatloads of Americans, probably the Long Knives themselves, were on their way to Detroit and would soon be at the Wea village. It was this news that had been sent to Detroit and which had disturbed Hamilton at his conference with his officers.

DeCeleron at first resolved to show fight, but after thinking it over and considering what he had heard of the Long Knives he resolved to show his heels, so he mounted his horse and hastily left the village and the friendly Indians to their fate.

The fort at Wea was a miserable stockade surrounded by a dozen wretched cabins, in which lived a few French families. It was located on the north side of the Wabash River, just below the site of the present city of Lafayette, Indiana. The Indians surrounding the village were the Upper Wabash tribe and were numerous, probably five hundred in all. They cared little for any flag or for any alliance. When DeCeleron abruptly left, they called a council to decide what to do. In their haste they left the gate of the fort open, and neglected to post any sentinels, not thinking of any immediate danger.

While they sat around the council, the yells of a hundred men were heard, and Helm rushed in, followed by his soldiers with their guns in their

hands. The savages were terrified and held up their hands in token of surrender, offering no resistance.

Helm hardly knew what to do with the village, now that he had captured it. He took down the British flag and put up the American flag in its place. The French were easily won over to their new allegiance, but the Indians had to be treated with less persuasion and more defiance.

Calling the savages together, he addressed them in words they could understand: "You Indians living on the Wabash River, you have heard of the Long Knives, and how far their tomahawks can reach. We are the Long Knives and there are many thousands more behind us. We desire to pass through your country to Detroit to drive out your father who is there, for your other father, the king of France has come to life and will drive the British from his hunting grounds. Here are two belts for you to see and choose, a green belt for peace with us, a red belt for war against us. Take which you like. If you take the green belt for peace, we will want a wide path to walk in for we are many in number, and we love room to march in, for in swinging our arms, our swords may hurt some of your people."

The Indians eagerly grasped the green belt,

and swore peace. This kept them in order for a few weeks anyhow. Shortly afterwards, Helm returned to Vincennes leaving a small garrison to show that Wea was now an American and not a British possession. The force that Clark had sent him returned to Kaskaskia, but the words that Helm had spoken to the Wea savages went on to Detroit to the increasing dismay of the Lieutenant-Governor.

Let us now return to Hamilton, whom we left ready to dispatch his boats down the Detroit River, and whose troops were ready to go aboard. It did not take long to complete the loading of the fifteen vessels with their supplies and ammunition and men and to start them down the river. At night he made his first camp and the General observed all the rules of military order though his enemy was six hundred miles away. He set guards, and pickets, and advanced sentries, and sent out scouts, and watched the boats as though he expected an attack every minute.

The next morning the camp awoke in a blinding snow-storm but the vessels continued on their way and by the end of the day came to the mouth of the river, where it was a question whether it was prudent to cross or not. It was only thirty-six miles across but the storm had whipped the

lake into such a swell that it was noon of the third day before the General dared start.

Night overtook the force on the lake. It was extremely dark, and the boats on ahead carried lights for the guidance of those astern. About eleven o'clock the wind shifted and it began to rain. A heavy swell rolled in, and Hamilton became alarmed for the safety of his men. Late in the night Hamilton's own boat discerned a beach and waiting until he could see the lights of the others he signalled to them to follow. In spite of the rain and the wind all the boats reached an oozy shore where the men remained in much discomfort during the rest of the night.

In the morning they found the mouth of the Maumee River, and the storm continuing, the party landed to rest upon the spot where now stands the city of Toledo. Here the soldiers shivered in the cold, for the wind was so strong and the wood so wet they could not build a fire. They spread what tents they could and sheltered themselves, and ate of cold food and waited until better weather should allow them to move on.

The next day the storm subsided, and the General was making ready to depart when to his surprise DeCeleron appeared in a boat coming down the river on his way to Detroit. He landed and went to the General's tent.

"The rebels are on their way to the Miamis, and are headed for Detroit," he told Hamilton. "A large force appeared at Wea and I was compelled to flee to save my life. I hear the tribes all along the way are making peace with the Americans."

Hamilton had his suspicions of DeCeleron for he knew him to be of a cowardly nature and much given to exaggeration.

"Did you see any of the rebels?"

"No, but Indian scouts told me about them, and I was hastening to let you know."

"I have already had the news some days ago, but unlike you I am not afraid of the rebels until I see them, nor do I believe everything an Indian tells me. You may go on to Detroit, for I have no need of men who run away before an enemy comes in sight."

DeCeleron was silent with mortification at this rebuke from his commander. But he was not sensitive and was glad to go back to the village, preferring the security of a fort to the open woods where the Long Knives might be.

The next day the men began the ascent of the Maumee River, some going in the boats, others in canoes, while still others marched in disorderly fashion along the banks. At night, however, Hamilton was careful to gather all the men in

regular camp fashion and post his sentries, for he was taking no chances against a rebel force that might, after all, be on its way to Detroit.

In spite of the heavy rain that Hamilton had encountered on his start, the waters of the Maumee were very low and the going was hard. In some places the boats scraped upon the muddy bottom or were stuck, in which case the men on the banks had to lend a hand in shoving them free or dragging them over shallow places. Their progress was slow. It took two weeks to reach the headwaters of the stream, and the place where the boats and the baggage had to be carried overland by portage to Little River, one of the tributaries of the Wabash. The distance was only nine miles but the difficulties were very great.

At the headwaters of the Maumee was a village of the Miami Indians. Hamilton told them he was on the warpath and was going south to punish his enemies. Of course their chiefs and braves were anxious to join him. The force was increased to three hundred men, but all the recruits he picked up as he went along were Indians. These Miamis he made help with the portage. They were husky savages, accustomed to cold and hardship. When they asked to join him he made it a condition that they would do

some of the carrying as well as some of the fighting.

The boats were then dismantled, at least the smaller ones were, and placed on poles for the backs of the stout warriors to struggle with for the nine miles through the woods. The canoes were more easily handled. The provisions and ammunition were packed in bales and loaded on the men's shoulders. In this way, in a few days, all the necessities of food and fighting material were carried from the headwaters of one river to the headwaters of another, and the force rested, ready to proceed down the Wabash as they had proceeded up the Maumee.

Fortunately the weather was good during the portage. Hamilton himself watched everything with great care. The country was level, with no mountains to cross, the woods were open and abounding in ash, beech, oak and other fine timber that some day was to furnish material for valuable industries of a prosperous civilization. The General could not foresee that in less than a hundred years there would be a dozen big cities within less than a hundred miles of the land over which he was leading a band of foreigners and savages.

Down the Wabash the force proceeded painfully. The weather became frosty and cold as

the winter set in. The floating ice cut the men as they worked in the water to haul the boats over rocks and shoals. The canoes and bateaux were damaged and had repeatedly to be unloaded, hauled to land and repaired. It was sometimes a day's work to go a mile and a half. It was necessary to stop at the Indian villages along the river to have "talk" with the savages, to get some supplies, to give them a few presents, and engage a few men to take the places of those sons of the forest who dropped out tired and disgusted with so much labor and so few scalps.

When the boats reached deep water, the trouble was not over, for then the river froze and the ice had to be beaten and cracked to let the boats proceed. If the rain had fallen, the men would have been quite helpless, for without fire and food they could not have survived. Fortunately the weather was dry though it was bitter cold at times. At night huge fires kept the men warm while plenty of food kept them strong.

When Hamilton reached Wea, the Indians there received him without surprise or hostility. They knew of his approach but were perfectly passive, not caring whether he came or not. The French settlers were equally indifferent.

"What flag is that over this miserable fort?" he asked of one of the chiefs.

"Not know—not care," was the answer.

"Who put it there?"

"White man—big chief Long Knives—you take it down, we no care—we take your oath too," which was much the way of the Indian.

Hamilton hauled down the American flag, made the garrison left by Helm prisoners and then released them on parole. The British flag again floated over the stockade but what cared the inhabitants? It was all one to them.

Some chiefs who had been hunting came in and explained that DeCeleron had left them when the Long Knives were approaching, and that Captain Helm had given them American flags to wear. They wore them as a kind of ornament and seemed proud of the possession and ill-pleased when Hamilton took the flags from around their waists and threw them in the fire. The Indians also bitterly complained that DeCeleron had not distributed the presents they expected, but had kept them for himself.

"Just as I thought," exclaimed the General. "That fellow is not only a coward and a traitor, but also a thief."

The savages at Wea all gave Hamilton their promise to spread themselves in all directions in the spring in their attacks upon the white settlements along the Ohio.

Early in December Hamilton resumed his march down the Wabash on the way to capture a town which he supposed to be full of rebel soldiers and surrounded by numerous Indian allies. He sent forward his scouts so as not to be surprised himself. These scouts overtook and captured four men whom Helm had dispatched up the river to reconnoitre for information, for he had heard rumors of the approach of an attacking party though he had not heard from where or by whom conducted.

When the men were brought before Hamilton he questioned them closely. "How many soldiers are in Vincennes?" he asked.

"We do not know," was the reply.

"Is Colonel Clark there, or is he at Kaskaskia?"

"We have not seen him."

"Have the Indians turned their alliance to the Americans or are they still friends of the British?" asked Hamilton, now with some irritation.

"Some have changed and some have not," was the evasive reply.

"What tribes have changed?"

"We do not know."

"I am of a mind to hang all four of you. I am General Hamilton, from Detroit. Have you ever heard of me?"

"Yes," said the Americans, who had heard of him all the way down in Virginia, and who now looked at him in surprise and with some distrust.

"I suppose you will let the Indians take our scalps first," was the bold reply of the officer in command of the little company.

Hamilton looked at him fiercely for a moment as if he would make some angry retort, then he turned to the guard.

"Take these men away and hold them as prisoners. They either have no information worth while, or they have no mind to disclose it. Don't let the savages get at them, for if they are hurt and the people of Vincennes know it, it will be hard to make peace once we are there."

Still not knowing the size of the defence of the post at Vincennes, the Lieutenant-Governor took precautions to send off scouting parties ahead of his march to prevent information of his approach reaching the village. Then, with his motley crowd of French and British soldiers, and his savage followers, in all amounting to five hundred, he dropped down the Wabash River until he came in sight of Vincennes. He saw the "rebel" flag floating over the fort and supposed that the American commandant had a force behind him. Hamilton had been on the way for seventy-one days, covering six hundred miles.

In sight of the end of his journey he landed the men, posted guards, sent forward a flanking party and made ready for a general engagement with the Americans. He did not know that Helm had sent nearly all his forces back to Kaskaskia and was almost alone in the fort.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE BIG GATE CARRIES A MESSAGE

CAPTAIN Helm at Vincennes was not entirely ignorant of the approach of Hamilton. He had sent out scouting parties from time to time to bring him information of the movements of the enemy. One of these parties had been captured as we related in the last chapter and the Captain had waited in vain for their return. Other spies, however, brought in reliable news that the British were on their final march and were not far from Vincennes.

Helm had a small cannon which he ordered fired when he wished the people to assemble. On the day he heard Hamilton was near, he directed the piece to be discharged. The French inhabitants, several hundred in number, came hurriedly to the post to inquire what was the matter.

"The British are on the march and are near to Vincennes. My scouts bring word they are many in number, and that their Indian allies are with them. You have taken an oath of allegiance to the American flag and I am here to defend this

fort to the last man. Can I depend on you to be as brave in deed as you have been in word?"

The inhabitants were alarmed at the news. They were not warlike and cared less for their allegiance to a flag than for their own comfort and safety. There was little enthusiasm and not much response. In their faces there was more fear of what Hamilton would do to them than of resolve of what they would do to him.

Helm again spoke to the crowd: "There are only two Americans here besides myself, but there are enough of you to show some fight to the British. You have guns and powder and we are inside the fort with plenty of provisions. The British have come a long ways and are worn out. The weather is cold, for it is now the middle of December. If we hold them off for a week or more, the Indians will get tired and desert them, or the Piankeshaws will attend to them. If we have to surrender we will demand the honors of war. Let us not be cowards."

Still the populace showed little interest in the defence of their town, and many of them turned around and left the assembly. Helm, seeing he could place no reliance in any of them, dismissed the crowd and gave his attention to other matters.

In a few hours a Frenchman came running into the village out of breath with the news. "The

British are within three miles of Vincennes. I saw their flag. They are landing troops and others are marching down the banks. I saw painted Indians also, many of them."

When the rumbling of Hamilton's approach reached the ears of those who were guarding the outskirts, all of them but three deserted their places and hid themselves in their houses. It was reported at the time that a number of the people went boldly out to meet the advancing British and delivered to them their arms, surrendering before they had been asked to do so.

This was not the case with all the militia at Vincennes however. There were a few who stood by the Captain, but the total number left for the entire defence of the town was not more than a dozen, and of those there was Helm himself and a blacksmith residing in the village named Moses Henry.

Bravely the American flag floated over the dilapidated fort. On came the steady march of Hamilton's army, who halted a few hundred yards from the door and prepared to make an attack upon what they supposed might be a considerable force. Helm watched them stop, post their troops, and make ready for the charge.

He smiled grimly. "I may as well do my part,

if I have to do it alone. I shall make some show of defence at least."

With the help of Moses Henry he rolled the old cannon to the door of the fort and pointed it toward the head of the British column. Then loading it to the muzzle he took a lighted match, according to the way they fired cannon in those days and alone stood at the door of the fort in a defiant and warlike manner. Henry stood close behind him, enjoying the grim humor of the American who was thus defending the cause he had espoused.

"I know this is what Clark would have me do. He has been bluffing his way all through this country and I may as well keep it up. If they make a rush I shall ply this match, and if the old cannon explodes it will take us both to the happy hunting grounds of our Indian allies. If it goes off as it should, heaven help the few in front of it, for it is jammed full of powder and bears a heavy ball."

Hamilton and his men came within a hundred yards. Helm cried out with a mighty voice: "Halt, or I shall fire!" The troops halted, seeing the loaded cannon with its muzzle pointed to them, and a determined officer standing by with a lighted match in his hand.

Some of the men raised their guns as if to fire,

but Hamilton wished to avoid bloodshed if possible, and ordered them to desist. He then called out, "Who are you and why should we halt? I am Lieutenant-Governor Hamilton, and I demand the surrender of this fort in the name of King George and the British Parliament."

Came the clear and ready answer, "I am Captain Leonard Helm, of the Long Knives, under command of Colonel Clark, now in possession of all the Illinois country. I defend this fort in the name of George Washington and the Continental army."

Hamilton turned to confer with several officers who were with him. The Indians were impatient and had already begun to chant in low tones the war songs that preceded the butchery of a village. Hamilton thought that his force was probably large enough to overcome any opposition from the Americans, but he also knew that once an attack was ordered nothing could stop the savages from a general massacre.

Seeing that no American force had come out to offer him battle, but still not knowing how many were behind the single gun at the door of the fort, he continued to parley:

"If we attack your town, we will destroy your fort, burn your houses, and I am not responsible

for the conduct of my Indian allies. I again demand your surrender."

"No man shall enter here until I know the terms required of me," was the defiant reply.

Hamilton thought a moment, and then said to Helm who still stood ready to carry out his threat of firing his cannon if the troops advanced:

"You shall have the honors of war, the safety of yourself and all the soldiers with you, and your town shall suffer no damage."

"Under those conditions I surrender this fort to superior numbers and under the compulsion of a force that I cannot resist," replied Helm, lowering his match.

Hamilton communicated this information to his men who in turn told the Indians. These latter received it with much dissatisfaction, for they had hoped for some blood at the end of a long march and of so much hard labor put upon them by their leaders.

The British officer approached the fort and Helm saluted him according to the usage of warfare when one officer surrenders to another. "Where are your troops?" demanded the General.

"Troops?" said Helm. "There are no troops. Only myself and Moses Henry, a blacksmith of Vincennes. You could have taken us with a score

of soldiers, instead of the brave five hundred you appear to have."

Hamilton was surprised and somewhat mortified. Here he had marched six hundred miles, in over two months, with a large force and at great expense and precaution, to be met by two men and one of them demanding and receiving the terms of an honorable surrender. Surely he would be the target of many a joke if it should ever be known at headquarters.

However he went about the surrender in the usual way. The British flag was raised over the fort, Helm and Henry were made prisoners of war, and sentries were placed at the gates to keep out the savages.

The sentries were not quick enough, however, to keep all the savages from entering the village. A number of them had found their way in and were already uttering war whoops. The inhabitants were terrified and barricaded their doors. Hamilton called for the chiefs and ordered them to restrain the Indians, but the chiefs were either unwilling or were powerless to stop the intruders.

A sentry had been posted at the door of Captain Helm's quarters to which he had retired after surrendering. A group of Indians rushed upon the sentry and overpowered him. Then they broke down the door and clambered into

the room where Helm sat smiling and apparently unconcerned.

Knowing they could not understand English, he yet called out to them, "Go it, you devils! You have been brought here to murder and steal, now do your worst."

By this time several British guards arrived and stood before the prisoner to protect his life. The savages turned from their prey and began plundering the house, the guard offering no protest to their violence. Other Indians were plundering other houses in spite of the entreaties of the inhabitants to be let alone and that they were friends of the British. It was all one to the dusky sons of the forest. They had come to plunder Vincennes and whether it was friend or foe they proposed to have their toll of what they wanted.

Fortunately not a shot was fired by the Indians or by any of the inhabitants. If there had been, in all probability the settlement would have been destroyed in an hour's time and every soul in it been tomahawked by the marauders. At length the Indians, having entered the houses and taken as much of the plunder as they desired, became quiet and agreed to pitch their camp on the outskirts of the village. Here they settled down unmindful of the snow and cold to which they had long been accustomed.

Thus it was that Vincennes, otherwise known as Fort Sackville, fell again into the hands of the British.

Two days after the surrender Hamilton called the people into the church. There he found that the village contained about six hundred men, women and children, and that there were over two hundred capable of bearing arms as soldiers. When he saw them before him he said to himself: "Here are two hundred good soldiers, and in the neighborhood are tribes of Indians whom Helm has made friendly. If they had shown any courage at all we never could have taken this place. And to think we met only one man at the door of the fort." These reflections increased his esteem of Captain Helm, but did not improve his opinion of the changeable disposition of the people.

To them he assumed a menacing tone. "I have called you here to let you know you have acted in a cowardly way, full of ingratitude to your sovereign, the king of England, and of base treachery to the British flag. Since you have laid down your arms and sued for protection I shall let you be secure in your persons and property. What things the Indians have taken away, I shall make the chiefs restore to you, but you must renew your oath of al-

legiance in whatever terms I shall dictate and you must sign your own names, or I shall treat you as prisoners of war and deal with you as I see fit."

The General then wrote out the oath the people were to take, in the following words:

"We declare that we have taken the oath of allegiance to the American government and in so doing have forgotten our duty towards God and have failed towards men. We ask the pardon of God and we hope for the mercy of our sovereign, the king of England, and pray that he will accept our submission and take us under his protection as good and faithful subjects, which we promise to become before God and men."

It is hard to say which was the most disgraceful, Hamilton for requiring such an oath or the people for taking it. It was quite a different kind of oath from that which Clark had required of the citizens of Kaskaskia and the other towns over on the Mississippi. However, in a few days it was signed by the people, and the ensign of St. George floated over the fort, and the citizens went about their business as usual.

Hamilton decided to settle himself in Vincennes for the winter and not proceed against Kaskaskia. The weather was severe, rains had

swollen the rivers, and he was afraid that should he withdraw his troops, and a force of Americans should appear, the people would change their allegiance again. Then he was not sure of his Indian allies. They might leave him in a body any time, for their alliance was as fickle as the wind, and as uncertain as running water.

Captain Helm was brought to Hamilton under guard of several soldiers. The General and his prisoner looked at each other with mutual interest. The General was the first to speak.

"Now that you have surrendered this place to his British majesty I shall expect you to take the oath of allegiance to the British flag. If you do so, I shall see that you get an ample reward."

"I am not so changeable in my allegiance as are the French of these villages and the savages of the woods. It is no disgrace to be a prisoner, but it would be one to be a traitor," replied Helm, the color mounting to his face.

"And are you not already a traitor and a rebel to your mother country? Are not all you Americans the same? Were you not born and reared and nurtured under the British flag, and have you not disowned the government that has protected you? What I ask of you is to return to the allegiance you have abandoned."

Helm controlled himself under this outburst

of the British commander. It was in his mind to smite the man before him for his insulting words, but he answered calmly.

"I was born under the British flag, as were other millions of people. From my youth I reverenced the country that we referred to as mother. My ancestors fought in the wars that were waged to protect this frontier from foreigners and savages. What have we gotten in return? Read our Declaration of Independence and you will find in it a list of grievances that would absolve any people from further allegiance to so obstinate a king and so subservient a Parliament. It is all set forth there."

"A fig for your Declaration. It is all nonsense," exclaimed Hamilton, testily.

"At any rate the count is easy," was the reply. "Every American has read it and knows it tells the truth."

"What are the counts?"

"Your foolish King George, led by unwise advisers and out of sympathy with his people, has refused his assent to necessary laws for the colonies and forbidden his governors to make any for themselves; he kept standing armies quartered on our people, who insulted them and ate all their substance; he cut off our trade with all ports of the world; he imposed taxes on us without our

consent; deprived us in many cases of trial by jury; he transported us beyond seas for trial for pretended offences, and when we appealed in respectful tones we were answered with harsh words. Even now his armies are ravaging our coasts, burning our towns, and killing our people. Such a king is not fit to be the ruler of a free people, and we here love liberty too much to bow our heads to the yoke of oppression."

Hamilton had no answer for the fervid words of the patriot who stood unafraid before him. He knew too well the character of his king, his self-will, his obstinacy, his shortsightedness, and his oppressive measures. He knew also that the English people sympathized with the colonists, and that in Parliament the cause of America had some brave defenders. He looked at Helm in some admiration and some surprise at the defiance in his tone.

"Furthermore," continued Helm, "he has sent officers over here who have incited these blood-thirsty savages to the utmost cruelty of warfare. All along the border of the Ohio the tomahawk and the firebrand have taken toll of the lives of women, children and old men. Perhaps the foreign officers did not know the nature of the red man, but they have had time to find out. And you yourself, sir, are accused of sending war

parties out to the white settlements with orders not to bring back prisoners, but for every scalp there was a reward waiting. I pray God that such is not true, for I can hardly believe a civilized man could deliberately buy human hair torn from the heads of defenseless creatures."

Hamilton rose hastily and waved his hand. "Enough! I am not here to be lectured by you about the doings of my king nor listen to any impression you may have about my own conduct. I owe you no explanations. You are my prisoner. I shall confine you to certain limits of this town, on parole. If you are caught beyond them you shall be shot. If you stay within them you will receive the treatment due to your rank."

Helm saluted and was about to go. "One more word," said Hamilton. "I shall spend the winter here. Then I shall proceed to do with Kaskaskia what I have done to Vincennes. I shall not ask you about your rebel Colonel, for I already know, but see that the subject of this war be not discussed again, for otherwise I might not be as generous."

Helm again saluted and passed out. He was given his parole and his limits were fixed. It is but just to say that in the weeks that followed he and Hamilton established a kind of compan-

ionship that served both to pass the dreary weeks of much snow and rain and discomfort.

Hamilton's first concern was to build quarters for his men and storehouses for his supplies. Then he went vigorously to work to reconstruct the old fort in order that it might afford better protection for his men in case of an attack. He designed the new fort in the shape of a triangle with a blockhouse at each angle where guns could be mounted and men posted to protect the sides of the fort. His work was done by his own soldiers, for the inhabitants were as slow to volunteer for labor as they were swift to change their allegiance.

The General reported to headquarters in Quebec that the village was built in a very straggling way, that the houses were two or three hundred feet apart, and that a few of them were close beside the fort. He suggested that these houses could be moved or destroyed, to which the Commander-in-Chief made the caustic comment, "It might have been easier to move the fort than it would be now to move the town."

The Indian allies of the British were engaged in scouting along the Ohio and war parties were sent out to harry the Kentucky settlements. If they came back with scalps the General was careful that his prisoner should not be aware of it.

In all probability the British commander did not see how he could send out an Indian war party, and at the same time tell the savages not to bring back the bloody evidences of their forays.

It will be remembered that the Big Gate who had picked up a little English, as well as French, had made up his mind after the customs of his race to cast in the lot of his tribe with the Americans and had made a solemn treaty with Captain Helm. Hamilton made many overtures to the solemn savage but they were coldly received. "Why not send your braves on the warpath to the border settlements? You can burn the houses, and get food, and guns, and powder to hunt next spring. Why sit here with the old women and the old men, when the young chiefs are away?"

The Big Gate shook his head. "The birds sing no more of war with my brother, the chief of the Long Knives. We have buried the hatchet and thrown the war belt into the water. I have smoked the pipe with him and his men. He can now sleep in my wigwam in peace."

"But see, there is no one here but him. He is one and we are many. He is a prisoner and we are free. I will give you many presents to lead your braves over to Kaskaskia and help me drive the Americans away."

"If my brother is a prisoner then I am a pris-

oner also. I have taken him by the hand, and his home is my home," and nothing that the General could do or say moved the Big Gate from his determination.

Solemnly wrapping his furs around him, he asked where Captain Helm was, and, on being told, went at once to his quarters. Helm was in his room seated by a fire when the Indian came in and sat down on the floor. The prisoner had supposed that his ally had long since forgotten his treaty and had gone off with others of his kind. So when he came in Helm was surprised and not a little perplexed, but he said nothing.

The Big Gate smoked his pipe and looked in the fire. Then he handed the pipe to Helm and said, "We smoke same pipe once more."

The Captain understood, and taking the pipe smoked it several times and handed it back to the Indian.

"White chief over there wants me to dig up hatchet and put on war paint," said the Big Gate, pointing towards Hamilton's headquarters.

"Will my brother leave me now, after we have smoked the pipe?"

"I told white chief I no go. You are a prisoner and I am one also. I stay here with you."

The Big Gate assumed voluntary confinement to the limits allotted the prisoner. There was no

reason why he should but that was his fancy, and while there was no requirement made of him and he could go as he pleased, he pleased to go only so far as Captain Helm went and no farther.

Weeks passed while Hamilton had his men cutting wood from the forest and building the fort he had designed. A long barracks was also thrown up as a shelter for the soldiers who could not find comfortable quarters in the houses of the inhabitants. The increase of the population by the coming of the British made a scarcity of supplies which was met by sending detachments for food up the river to the British posts in spite of the ice and rain. The winter settled down hard and cold. Oftentimes the rain fell for days, and then a freeze would follow. The men huddled over the fires in the poorly built houses while the Indians wrapped up in their blankets and furs and slept like bears in a cave.

No news came to Captain Helm of affairs about Kaskaskia. He had no idea if Clark knew of the capture of Vincennes. Neither did he know if Hamilton had sent another expedition against the Mississippi towns, or if they had shared the fate of the fort he had surrendered. Hamilton had said he intended to move against Kaskaskia in the spring, but no dependence could

be placed on statements of that sort in time of war.

It came into Helm's mind that he should make an effort to inform Clark of the situation at Vincennes and the presence of Hamilton and let the Colonel act as his own intrepid nature should suggest. The question was how it should be done. He was a prisoner closely watched, and there was no one who could be depended upon to carry a message. It required courage and knowledge of the trail besides secrecy of movement. Moses Henry was too clumsy for such a mission, and as for the French inhabitants there was not one that Helm would trust. Still, the Captain knew that Clark should get some word in order to guide his future movements.

The first thing he did was to write the message. There was no lack of paper and other writing material, but he was seldom alone and there were vigilant eyes watching him. There were cracks in the door and in the window by which he could easily be seen day and night.

He complained of being sick and desired to go to bed and be left undisturbed for awhile. Since his movements were at his own disposal there was no objection to this and so the Captain went to bed, taking with him some paper whereon he

intended to set down his message to his commander.

Then under the blanket with infinite care he wrote what he desired Clark to know. It was a difficult task since there was slight protection from the outside, and soldiers were constantly coming into his room. It is one of the exactions of all prisoners that whatever they write shall be read by their captors before it is delivered. Helm was under no oath or promise to do this and if he could get a note delivered without being seen it was his right.

The note contained a statement of all that had happened from the time that the British force was first heard from. There was fully laid forth the unwillingness of the French inhabitants to defend their town though they were numerous enough to hold the enemy at bay, also the incidents of the surrender of the village, and Helm's imprisonment.

"I have been treated well, and cannot complain of the courtesy or kindness of the general in command," the note continued. "I am a prisoner in bounds, but have suffered no hardship. I understand that a proposal will be made to exchange me for Rocheblave, but I advise against it. The British will not move against you until the spring, unless they have already done so from

another quarter, therefore it is important for you to know that Hamilton is housed quietly in this place waiting his time to do for Kaskaskia what he has done for Vincennes and then drive us all out of this territory. I know you too well to believe you will allow that to be done."

There were other things in the note, about the number of the troops, the building of the fort, the layout of the town, the Indian allies, and the general attitude of the people toward the British.

After an hour or more Helm arose and dressed and sat beside the fire meditating upon some method of delivering the note which he had carefully folded and sealed.

The Big Gate came in and sat on the floor as was his custom. For nearly a week he had declined to go beyond the bounds allotted to Helm. He seemed to enjoy being a prisoner, and all efforts to get him to return to his wigwam were unavailing. To every question he replied: "Me prisoner, with my brother, the Long Knife."

An idea came into Helm's mind: Why not get the Big Gate to take the note? He seemed to be the best chance, and the Captain at once resolved to try. So he began the conversation, painfully making the savage understand him, sitting near to the Indian and speaking in a low

tone, so that an outsider might not hear the words.

"Big Gate, do you know the trail through the forest to the great river, over there where your brothers, the Kaskaskias, live?"

"Me know. Been there lots times."

"Would you like to go to see the Big Chief of the Long Knives and get some presents from him?"

"You go too?" was the quick and direct question.

"No, I cannot go. I am a prisoner and cannot get away."

"Me prisoner too. Me no get away."

"But you can go if you wish, anyhow, and you can come back and be a prisoner again."

The Indian shook his head, and seemed offended that his brother should desire to get rid of him. He rose to go, but Helm laid his hand on his arm to detain him.

"Big Gate, you say you are my brother. I want you to help me. I have some words for the Big Chief to hear. They are on this paper. I want you to take this paper to the Big Chief at Kaskaskia and let it speak to him. You must not let anyone see it or let it speak to anyone but him."

The Big Gate looked interested but still doubt-

ful. The Captain continued, "You will see the Big Chief. You can take him by the hand. You can eat his food, and see his braves. You can take some of your young men with you."

"Will the Big Chief let me come back to my people and to you and be prisoner once more?"

"Yes."

"Then I go. Give me the paper that speaks. I leave today. But I get back soon."

Captain Helm took the note from his own jacket and put it in the belt that the Indian wore around his waist. He carefully concealed it from view, thinking it was perfectly safe in the hands of so trustworthy and devoted a friend.

The Indian arose and prepared to depart. He seemed to understand and appreciate his mission. He wrapped his blanket around him and stalked majestically and solemnly from the room.

Once outside he started for the palisades and in a few moments was beyond the bounds he had set for himself. Those who watched him were surprised at this and wondered what change had taken place in his determination. Down the street of the village he went, his steps still slow and cautious. All would have gone well had not some soldiers more adventurous than the rest accosted him and taken hold of the blanket that was around him.

The Indian turned in fury. He was a chief and not accustomed to any indignity. Besides that, he was no friend of the redcoats and resented any familiarity from them. The soldier still persisted in holding the blanket and finally it fell from the form of the savage and lay upon the ground. The man, half intoxicated, laughed aloud, and tried to catch the savage around the waist as if to wrestle with him, which was a favorite pastime of the Indians and in which sport the soldiers often joined.

In so doing the belt that concealed the note broke and the white paper fell to the ground in full view of the others who had gathered around to witness the wrestling match. Seeing a paper fluttering to the earth, and knowing the Big Gate had just left the room of Captain Helm, a man put his foot upon it as if to capture it.

The Big Gate leaped like a tiger. He was a brawny savage in the prime of life, well known for his prowess in the race and in the games of his tribe. Long inured to quick action, he caught the offending redcoat who had stepped on the precious paper, and with one mighty effort lifted him from the ground and threw him violently among the others standing near. He fell like a bolt from a battering ram, taking a half dozen with him. The Indian himself seized the

paper from the ground and leaving his blanket where it had fallen, fled like the wind through the streets and beyond the town.

Behind him came a hue and cry. The soldiers were no runners and knew it was a hopeless task to overtake a fleet-footed savage racing into the wilds of his own woods. But there were Indian allies, those of the Wabash, who liked not the Piankeshaws, and who were jealous of the strength and skill of their leader. Oftentimes he had challenged their best men to a race, and left them far behind. Once he had broken the back of a Wabash wrestler by throwing him across a fallen tree in a match of strength. Therefore, the Wabash who held alliance with Hamilton were ready for action against any or all of the Piankeshaws.

Hamilton himself appeared on the scene. "Why all this noise and what is the meaning of this disturbance?" demanded he of the bystanders.

"The Big Gate has a paper and has fled beyond the town with it. He flung a soldier ten feet who tried to get it."

Hamilton was quick to understand. "Ah, a courier to Kaskaskia, with a note from Helm. Quick, some horses."

Horses were brought out from the corral, and several Indians volunteered to mount them.

Any excitement was much to their taste, and a wild ride after a Piankeshaw chief was particularly so.

The orders were simple: "Bring back the Big Gate dead or alive," and the race was on.

But the Indian had already a half-hour start and was almost as swift as a horse and far more cunning than his pursuers. Once outside the limits of the village he plunged into the forest, and leaving the trail, completely encircled the village until he came to the other side. The pursuit kept the trail straight ahead for several miles, halted, dismounted, and searched the soft ground for evidences of recent tracks. None could be found. They knew full well how almost hopeless it is to catch an Indian in a forest. With the stealth and hearing of a wild animal, with the color of the wood itself, with friendly cover all around, it is about as hard to see a savage even though near you as it is to find a quail hiding under a leaf.

The Wabash tied their horses together and left them standing while they scoured the forest for sight or sound of the fugitive.

In the meantime the Big Gate had gone in the opposite direction toward the camp of his own tribe, some few miles distant. Here he gathered three more of his best followers, told them what

he had to do, and entrusted to one of the most reliable the speaking paper, and directed him to take it to Kaskaskia and the Big Chief of the Long Knives in case the party was overtaken.

Then departing by night the wily savages separated on their mission agreeing to meet at stated times at certain places. By morning they had eluded all pursuit and were back on the trail to the Mississippi town, while the Wabash braves went sullenly home.

When Hamilton accosted Helm and accused him of sending a note by the Indian, Helm replied with a smile, "I was under no oath to refrain from communicating with Clark. That part was omitted from my obligation."

Hamilton was too much of a soldier not to recognize that Helm had fairly outwitted him, and said nothing more.

## CHAPTER IX

### CLARK MAKES READY TO MARCH ON VINCENNES

LET us now return to Colonel Clark, whom we left in complete charge of Kaskaskia and of other towns on the Mississippi.

During the summer the Colonel's actions had been so wise and prudent that his authority was pretty well established in the villages he had captured. There was quiet among the white population and the Indians were peaceful and tranquil in their wigwams. He now had time to reflect upon the conquest he had made, as perfect so far as it had been bloodless. He remembered, however, the words that Governor Henry had spoken to him: "I must observe to you that your situation is critical," and he said to himself, "The Governor does not know how critical the situation is. I feel that I am sleeping over a volcano that may overwhelm me at any moment."

The Colonel came to the conclusion that the British at Detroit would make a descent on the Illinois country, and that Kaskaskia would be the object of their attack. He knew in all reason

that Hamilton had heard of the presence of the Long Knives, and probably had heard of their strength, or rather of their weakness. To all the inquiries of the inhabitants regarding the number of his men, he returned vague answers, saying he was expecting reinforcements from Virginia at any time. To such Indians as came and went he was accustomed to say:

"The Long Knives are many and stretch far back into the forest, and beyond the waters of the rivers. Should I call them they will fall upon these villages like leaves from the trees in winter."

These words resulted in a great exaggeration of the size of his army, so that the Indian and French messengers to Detroit reported three or four times the real size to the commander at that place.

Clark had his own spies in the field. There was a kind of chain of information by which word was passed on from village to village and from runner to runner, so that the movements of Hamilton were soon known to Clark. He heard of the Indian councils, of the preparation for the march, but he did not hear what destination was in the mind of the British commander. Clark thought in all probability it was his intention to come down the Mississippi rather than the Wabash, which he should have done. It was a rational

supposition and was the proper military movement. Therein Clark showed himself a better officer than Hamilton.

Clark was talking to one of his officers. "Detroit would not be hard to capture, for it is not much larger than this place. It is over six hundred miles from here, but we have friendly tribes most of the way, and can make friends of more as we go along. If Hamilton does not come my way soon, I may go after him. I shall wait awhile and see if he comes down the Mississippi or overland. If he does not I may march against him myself, especially if any forces from below join me."

"The question of the possession of this territory cannot be settled until you and Hamilton fight it out, or someone else moves on Detroit."

"I have reliable news that he is preparing a force to march somewhere, but where I do not know."

"I have it from a runner from the eastern tribes that an American force is on the march from Fort Pitt and that they are headed north," said the officer.

"That may be General McIntosh moving on Detroit," replied the Colonel, shortly. "In which case it may be that Hamilton has heard of

it and is preparing to meet him on his way, or else to get the Indians to harry him on his march."

Clark did not know that McIntosh had returned to Fort Pitt, that Detroit was not his destination, and that Hamilton had not even heard of his movements. No word from the Maumee section came after the British commander had reached that point. The Indians were either overawed by the British or were made friendly to their cause. In vain did Clark send out his spies. When they got where news could be had they were captured or else returned without information.

Cold weather set in, the rain fell, the trails became difficult, the Indian spies were less willing than ever to traverse the forest, Clark had no news from Helm and none of Hamilton.

December came and Clark gave up any expectation of seeing Hamilton's boats descending the Mississippi. "He may have gone no further than the head of the Maumee River, and then turned back," was the suggestion made to him.

"That may be true," said the Colonel, "but it is good military prudence to suppose that he did not turn back. He may be somewhere in this wilderness of snow and rain and ice. I wish I knew where he was."

It was Clark's purpose to withdraw the garri-

son at Cahokia and let the British have that place in case it was attacked. He desired, however, to find out what the people would do in case the British captured them and demanded another change of their allegiance.

"I cannot blame them much, for they will very easily be overpowered, but I do not want them to take up arms against us," was his comment.

In spite of the weather he set out for Cahokia with a few men as a guard. In the afternoon he reached Prairie du Rocher about twelve miles above Kaskaskia, where he had to spend the night.

The villagers proposed a dance in honor of his arrival. The Colonel forebore to tell them of his fears, and allowed the fun loving French to light the big hall and bring out the music and come with their best finery to celebrate his appearance in their midst. The dance began soon after dark and was proceeding very happily when a messenger from Kaskaskia burst into the room and called for the Colonel.

"What is the matter?" demanded Clark.

"A large force of British and Indians are camped just outside of Kaskaskia and threaten the town. It may be Hamilton. Our men estimate there are eight hundred of them. It is said

they intend to attack the fort tonight, before you can return," was the astounding reply.

The villagers heard the messenger, and the utmost confusion reigned. They were now more afraid of the British than ever they were afraid of the Long Knives. Every eye was turned on Clark as if he alone could be the means of their salvation.

It required but a moment for the Colonel to decide to return at once to Kaskaskia, and get through the lines of the enemy into his own fort. But his face and speech showed no alarm of any kind.

Turning to one of the officers who had accompanied him he quietly said, "Get all the horses ready for our party to leave at once." Then turning to the crowd he said loudly, "It can hardly be true that the British are at Kaskaskia. Come let us continue our dance."

The music began again, and to conceal his concern and to inspire the people with courage, Clark led the village belle out on the floor and danced with her and the others until the horses were announced as ready for departure.

It was after midnight, dark and cold. Only the snow on the ground gave back the reflection of the stars and showed the almost covered trail along the river side. The party pushed their

horses to their utmost strength, and about two o'clock came within a half mile of the town. Everything was quiet and no lights were showing.

Before leaving Prairie du Rocher Clark had provided his men with blankets to wrap up in and mingle with the besiegers in case they should find the city attacked. By this means he hoped to make his way through their ranks and into the fort. But the coverings were not necessary for there was no evidence anywhere of any hostile party.

It took but a short time for the party to reach the fort. The guard accosted them and finding out who they were admitted them quickly to the warmth of the interior.

Still Clark did not know whether the rumor was true or false. The British might be in the woods outside the town and might not.

"I wonder if they are waiting for me to abandon this place and seek my safety across the river among my friends, the Spanish?" said he to himself, with a smile. "If they are they will wait a long time, for I never run, at least not until I see my enemy's face."

Now the good Father Gibault was in the fort, and late as was the hour, sought Clark with the greatest consternation. He was of all those in

Kaskaskia the most afraid of Hamilton. He knew that it was through his intercession that Vincennes had so easily come over to the Americans and feared that Hamilton knew it also. Being of a priestly nature and timid he dreaded the consequences should he fall into the hands of the soldiers or allies of the officer whom he had heard recently paid for the scalps of white people regardless of whether they were French or Americans.

As a matter of fact Hamilton did treasure an unrelenting hatred of the priest. He said of him, "This wretch absolved the French inhabitants from their allegiance to the king of Great Britain. The inhabitants themselves have not a single virtue, but the most vicious among them is that fellow Gibault."

In this opinion no one followed the British commander. Now that the redcoats were supposed to be outside the gates of his town, and in numbers large enough to overcome the small garrison, Gibault was in fear of his life, though he tried to conceal the fact from his commander.

Clark, seeing his consternation, inquired the cause.

"I am no soldier, but the Lieutenant-Governor of Detroit knows that I am your friend. His soldiers and Indians are outside the gates, and

may attack us at any time. If I am captured these people will be without a priest and they need me."

The Colonel saw the anxiety that beset the good Father, and to relieve him pretended he wished him to go to the Spanish side of the river with important papers. In fact he did wish the Spaniards to know of his supposed peril, and while he had not thought of using the priest as his messenger, it occurred to him that Gibault might do as well as anyone.

Therefore hastily writing a note to Don Leyba explaining the situation, he gave it to the priest with instructions to proceed promptly to the other side of the river and despatch it to St. Louis by any messenger he could find.

The priest welcomed the opportunity. Before day, with one servant to attend him, he slipped out of the village and set out in a boat down the Kaskaskia. When he reached the Mississippi he found the current full of floating ice and his own boat in great danger of being swamped. Steering to a small island at the mouth of the Kaskaskia, the priest and his servant landed, built a camp, and wrapping themselves up in their blankets, proceeded to make the best of a bad situation.

In the meantime Clark determined to take

every precaution against the possibility of an enemy bursting from their hiding places in the woods and descending upon his fort. He called the people of Kaskaskia together in order to find out their purposes. They were timid enough about coming and their appearance showed anything but bravery.

"If you will defend this fort and act the part of good soldiers, we will all go out at once and find the British and Indians and attack them," said he. But to this the French promptly objected.

"Then in case we are attacked here will you stand by me and your oath of allegiance to the American flag?"

To this they gave a half-hearted reply, which convinced the Colonel that the French inhabitants were not very warlike in their disposition, and preferred peace on any terms.

At last several of the boldest ones spoke up. "We think the British are too numerous for us to resist and will certainly capture the fort if they try. We admire you and we love you, and for that reason we would like for you to withdraw from our village and take your men over to the Spanish side of the Mississippi to avoid being taken prisoners by Hamilton."

Clark was at first amused and then he was in

a rage. "Do you take me for a coward and a traitor? I have never yet turned my back upon an enemy and I shall not begin now. You are not faithful to your pledges and are not deserving of my confidence. Your pretended love for me should be shown in more bravery and less caution. Now you may go, for I can place but little dependence on you."

The inhabitants protested that they were Clark's friends, and to show their real interest proposed to bring all their provisions and store them in the fort in case of a siege.

"I shall have all the provisions and I shall also burn your town to prevent anything falling into the hands of my enemy. Those in the fort can withstand a siege of six months," was the reply.

Clark had no such intention, of course, but he had always found threatening words of much avail with these people.

As soon as they departed, Clark had his men set fire to some out houses containing nothing of value. This convinced the inhabitants of his resolve to fight to the last. Never was a people in more distress. Their town was being set on fire by those whose friendship they sought, and at the same time surrounded by savages from whom they could expect but little mercy.

On account of the snow and rain, the fire did

not spread and no damage was done. But the people found out that Clark was a man of his word and came running to the fort with food and supplies enough to last for months.

Fortunately the weather was clear, or Father Gibault would have suffered in his camp on the island. Finding a few dry sticks his servant at last produced a fire by which the two warmed themselves and heated food. Three days they stayed in their camp while the ice floated by and no prospects came of crossing the great stream in the frail bark in which they had set out.

The priest resolved to turn back and face the possibility of capture. In the middle of the third day he and his man got in the boat and rowed to the shore and landed, resolved to walk home rather than row against the heavy current of the Kaskaskia. Hardly had they proceeded a mile before they saw footprints in the snow in such numbers that they were alarmed for their own safety.

The two halted and listened attentively. Their ears caught the distant crunch of snow and the breaking of branches. They could not tell whether the oncomers were friends or foes, but decided to take no chances. Quickly they lay down behind a fallen log completely concealed from the trail they were following. In a few

minutes a file of Indians appeared marching one behind the other. The priest counted twenty, though his timid heart beat so loudly he was afraid he would be discovered.

Then in a few minutes a file of British soldiers appeared marching as did the Indians, their guns trailing. The priest again counted twenty. "That makes forty in all," said he to himself. "I wonder if there are any others?"

Slowly the Indians and British disappeared in the distance, going away from the village. The priest was almost overcome by cold and fear, but he kept still until the enemy were well out of sight. Then he and his servant arose and made all haste to the village.

Clark was immediately informed of the adventure of Father Gibault and exclaimed, "It is as I really supposed. Merely a scouting party sent out by Hamilton to find out my strength."

To verify this, the Colonel sent spies on the trail of the departing men as well as to scour the woods in all directions. The spies found only a deserted camp and signs of a few men, about the number reported by the priest.

There had been no army encamped against Kaskaskia and the alarm was all for nothing. But Clark suspected strongly that the returning force carried news to Hamilton wherever he was

that the villages along the Mississippi were poorly defended.

Days passed in much perplexity. Clark still did not know of the whereabouts of Hamilton, and was much worried. As he sat in his room one afternoon a guard came in and said to him, "There is an Indian here who says his name is Big Gate, and that he is a Piankeshaw from Vincennes and knows Captain Helm. He is asking for the Big Chief of the Long Knives."

"Tell him to come in by all means. Perhaps he will bring me some news."

There entered the solemn and dignified form of the Indian chief, little betraying the fact that he had walked day and night to reach his destination and more than once had to exert all his woodcraft to escape the scouting parties that Hamilton had in the field.

The chief sat down on a chair and slowly laid aside his blanket and his robe of fur. In his broken English he asked, "You the Big Chief?"

"Yes, they call me that," replied Clark.

"Then I have speaking paper for you from my brother Helm. He prisoner, and send me see you."

The chief arose and went to the door and called the braves who had come with him. One of them gave him a paper, which the Big Gate with much

ceremony handed to the Colonel. Then the Indians sat down to await the reading of the paper which Clark proceeded to do at once.

We know its contents. It was a full explanation of all the details of the situation at Vincennes and completely enlightened the Colonel as to all that had happened to Helm and his garrison.

After reading the message, Clark sat a long time lost in thought. At length he exclaimed, "I would bind myself for seven years as a slave could I but have five hundred troops."

The Big Gate waited to make his speech. With much hesitation and effort, he told the Colonel that he was a friend of the Long Knives as long as the winds blew and the rivers ran; that Helm was his brother and could sleep in his tent forever; that he would take no more scalps from the heads of his friends but would dye all the streams red with the blood of the British; and finally that he wanted to take the Big Chief by the hand and dance with him around the council fires of his nation.

Clark replied in the same kind, knowing well what manner of speech was suited to the Indian taste. He told the Piankeshaw what the letter spoke to him, also how the British had deceived the Indians, and that the Long Knives were the

brothers of the red men, and that their Father Washington was greater and stronger than their old Father across the waters. Then the Big Gate and his comrades shook the Colonel by the hand and left the room.

The letter from Helm did not decrease the anxiety of the Colonel. It really increased it, for now he knew that Hamilton was at Vincennes with a large force and that as soon as the weather permitted he would move against Kaskaskia with a larger body of men than Clark himself could summon.

The very next day after the appearance of the Big Gate came Francis Vigo to Kaskaskia. It seems that Vigo had gone to Vincennes early in December on his own private business and was there when the fort was captured. Hamilton had detained him, but being a Spanish subject he was well treated, being required to report to headquarters once a day and under no circumstances to speak to Captain Helm. Helm, of course, knew of his presence, but belonging to a neutral nation the Spaniard could not offer any assistance to anyone.

Vigo grew weary of his confinement, and not being a prisoner of war and under no parole, he found means of making his escape. Instead of going to St. Louis he came to Kaskaskia to re-

port to his friend Clark all he knew about affairs at Vincennes.

His words confirmed all that Helm had written and all that the Indians themselves had subsequently told. No attack was to be made on Kaskaskia until spring. Indian war parties were to be sent out to all parts of the country, especially Kentucky. Belts, presents and speeches were sent to the tribes along the Ohio calling for a grand council to make plans for cutting off Clark and his men. The Shawanese were shortly to go on the warpath, and four hundred Indian allies were still around Vincennes. Some of which was correct and some was not, but all of which Vigo believed to be true.

Clark and his friend sat long in conference the day of his arrival. At the end of it, Clark said, "There is no alternative. I must attack Hamilton in Vincennes or he will attack me in Kaskaskia. The one who attacks first will have the advantage."

"I wish you God speed, my friend," said the Spaniard. "I know not why I prefer you to the British commander, but I do. My sympathies are entirely with the Americans." And with these words Francis Vigo left the Colonel and set out on his way to St. Louis.

Clark had made up his mind. In his usual

way he acted with promptness and vigor. Calling Tim to his room, he said, "My boy, you know how to ride a horse. Get one from the corral, mount it and ride to Cahokia and tell the captain there to bring his men here. I am going to march against Vincennes."

"Vincennes!" exclaimed the lad. "Then we shall see some real war and I am going along. I will have word at Cahokia quicker than anyone else can do it."

The boy was off alone on a fleet horse.

At Prairie du Rocher he called for the commander and gave him the word of his superior officer. "When is he going?" was the natural question.

"He did not say. But he needs all the men he can get," was the reply.

When Tim reached Cahokia he rode straight to the fort and called for Captain McCarty who was in charge. The Captain was a big tall Irishman, bluff and hearty. "Well, Tim, my boy, what brings you here in such a hurry? Nothing wrong, I hope."

"Everything is all right, and we are off for Vincennes. The Colonel says bring your men to Kaskaskia, for he wants to move."

"What? Vincennes? That's sure good news.

Now my Long Knives will have something to shoot at besides rabbits."

Tim stayed over the day, but was too full of excitement to remain long away from his Colonel. As soon as his horse was rested, he started back to Kaskaskia, where he arrived and reported to Clark the full performance of his mission.

The determination of Clark to attack Hamilton was quickly known throughout all the Illinois towns. Strange to say, but fortunately, no part of his intention was allowed to reach the British, but was kept closely guarded by those who knew of it. The whole country took fire at the news. Every order of the Colonel was executed with cheerfulness by every kind of inhabitant. Many of those who had appeared alarmed by the supposed presence of the British, anxious to restore their good name, enlisted for the enterprise. The women of the village cheered the men, and insisted upon giving a dance every night in order to celebrate the approaching departure of the troops.

It was now the first day of February, in the year 1779. In order to provide stores for his men, Colonel Clark ordered a boat to be made ready to convey provisions, quantities of ammunition, and six small cannon, around by water to the neighborhood of Vincennes to meet his force

going overland. When the boat was ready and loaded, Clark named it *The Willing,* and put forty-six men on board under command of Lieutenant John Rogers. She was the first American gun-boat set afloat upon the Mississippi. It was the order to Lieutenant Rogers to make his way down the Mississippi, up the Ohio and the Wabash and get as close to Vincennes as possible.

The troops began to assemble. Captain McCarty marched into town with his company from Cahokia, singing Irish songs. As they reached the open place in front of the fort they broke into a circle and executed a war dance in imitation of the Indians.

The Kaskaskians formed a company of volunteers under Captain Charleville, and insisted upon enlisting with the Long Knives.

The Long Knives were in great good humor. For over six months they had been idle and lonesome, with nothing to do to their liking. There had been no British to fight, no Indians to punish, and but little hunting in the woods. Clark had not allowed them to waste powder in private shooting, but he was sure that their unerring marksmanship was as keen as ever.

The day before the departure he relented somewhat and in order to test the rifles and the aim

of his men instituted a target practice for their benefit. Emptying one of the houses of the inhabitants he cut holes in the door not much larger than a gun barrel. These he called port holes of a fort. Directing his men to fire through them at a supposed enemy behind, he discovered that practically every shot went through. Birds flying overhead were brought down, spots on the trees were pierced, and in fact it appeared that no target was too difficult for them to reach.

All this the Big Gate, who still lingered in the village, watched with fascinated gaze. "Me no shoot rifle, but me can throw tomahawk," he exclaimed. Then while the Long Knives looked on, the big savage took his tomahawk from his belt and with a great whoop sent it flying fifty feet through the air. Its blade sank deep into the soft wood of a tree. Not to be outdone by his chief one of the followers of the Indian drew his scalping knife whose handle was heavily loaded, and rising from the ground hurled it through the air, giving it the proper motion as it left his hand. The blade turned in the air and its point struck deep in the door of the house at which the Long Knives had been firing.

At night the inevitable banquet and dance for the merry-hearted French people, in the same hall where they had been dancing on the fourth

of July when Clark first appeared. There was music and laughter and good cheer. "Our Colonel will take Vincennes as he took Kaskaskia. May he take all the territory from the British as he has taken the Illinois country!" was the favorite toast.

Clark smiled and replied, "I do not know how large a force the British have, but I feel certain that before many days Vincennes will be ours. And when this war comes to a close and the redcoats are gone all this territory shall be a part of the territory belonging to the Colonies."

The next day the men were drawn up in line and made ready for their going. There were about two hundred of them, counting the French who had enlisted. They were in the pink of condition, each man carrying his rifle on his shoulder and his pack on his back. The day was bright and while the snow was still on the ground, the sun was warm and the sky blue, and the prospects cheerful. The Big Gate and his followers and a few other Indians were going with the men. The chiefs of other tribes desired to join Clark, but he discouraged their going with him, saying he needed them to stay behind and guard the village.

Father Gibault spoke to the men a priestly farewell, and gave absolution to all the company,

whether they were of his faith or not. The entire population of the village gathered to see the troops depart. Clark waved his sword and mounting his horse put himself at the head of the column. Tim seized his drum and began to beat a march. The men wheeled and turned and moved out of the square and down the street on their way to Vincennes.

## CHAPTER X

### OVER THE DROWNED LANDS TO VICTORY

ON the fifth day of February, 1779, Colonel Clark and his two hundred men set out on their way to Vincennes. They had to go two hundred miles, through woods and across prairies, over land intersected with many streams. Ordinarily it was a beautiful country, but in the dead of winter, and in the rainy season, the perils of such a journey would have daunted any hearts less brave than those of the Long Knives.

Clark rode a horse which had been brought from the South, the finest animal of the kind in all the country. Hardly had the little army crossed the Kaskaskia when it began to rain, sad prophecy of many rainy days to come. After marching a few miles the party made camp for the night, and on account of the rain and mud had to stay in that place the next day. Fortunately the weather was not cold and the rain did not freeze as it fell.

The route the army was following was known as the Vincennes trail. It was a portion of the

trail leading on to Wea and thence to Detroit, traveled by the French and Indians from the Mississippi to the lakes, and even from Louisiana to Canada. It bore to the northeast, inclining northward to avoid the deep water in some of the rivers that had to be crossed.

After a day's march the real difficulties of the trail began to appear. The rain was incessant and the men were already soaked to their skins. On the level plains through which they had to pass the water stood where it fell, and the troops took up their march through the mud and slush and sometimes through water that covered their shoes.

They were hardy backwoodsmen and used to discomfort. They were a picked lot, strong, young, vigorous. So they sang as they went and made jokes and cheered one another on the way.

Tim had no chance to beat his drum, nor did the men need it. It was all the lad could do to keep his drum dry, and to keep up with the men. Every now and then one of the soldiers would carry the drum for awhile, and when a particularly hard place came in the trail they would laughingly catch the boy and pitch him over, somewhat to Tim's indignation and always to the amusement and delight of the soldiers. The Big Gate and his few followers trudged along silently

regardless of weather, for all the world as if they would as soon be in the rain as to stand in the sun.

After five days' marching they came to the fork of a river whose waters had risen so high the men could not ford the stream. Quickly they cut down trees and made a bridge to pass over on, the horses, what few there were to carry the equipment and provisions, wading or swimming across.

In spite of the fact that there were no tents, and the rain poured incessantly, the men managed somehow to find enough dry wood to start fires at night, and by piling up brush to make shelter for themselves, wrapping up in their blankets, and not complaining, the nights were passed in good humor in spite of the discomfort.

Clark did not restrain his men from shooting. Game was plentiful and the men were allowed to range at will in search of what they could find. In order to keep the men in spirits he allowed each company in turn to shoot game and load it on the horses and give a feast at night when the party camped. In this way there was some rivalry and much jesting about the quantity and quality of the food.

The company that was to give the feast invited the others. After the feast was over the party

sang, and if there was any room in the camp or any ground for the purpose, the men danced Indian fashion and made what sport they could out of the severe conditions in which they found themselves.

After eight days they came to the drowned lands of the Little Wabash. Here two streams were before them and though ordinarily they were three miles apart, they now made but one stream. Both rivers had risen and their waters had met. It was five miles across and the water was three feet deep in the shallowest part.

The Colonel looked it over. "This is enough to stop any set of men except the sort I have with me. If I turn back I am lost and the cause is lost. There is nothing to do now but to go on."

About the same time, Hamilton, comfortable in his quarters and seeing the incessant rain, had remarked, "Friend or enemy will need wings to reach Vincennes such weather as this."

Clark ordered the men to build a boat. "That is the best way to get us over," he remarked, as if going across was a matter of course. It took a whole day to build the boat, the men working cheerfully. Manning it with a few of his closest friends, he privately told them to explore the stream, find a dry place on the other side, and "to bring back good news under any conditions."

About four o'clock in the afternoon the boat was set afloat on the drowned lands. The men were gone until dark when they returned with word that there was camping place of a half acre on the other side, and that the passage across was not even difficult, let alone impossible. Therefore two days later, the men having rested well, the whole party was ferried across the deeper part of the two streams, the horses swimming as before. In the shallower part of the streams the men waded with the same merriment and courage they had carried all along.

The march had now been twelve days long, and nearly all of them were rainy. Small streams were forded, swampy lands slushed through, mud and mire overcome, and now the disaster was upon them of a shortage of provisions. Game no longer appeared, and two hundred lusty men, after a day's march can get very hungry. Fortunately they had covered most of the way to their goal.

The commissary of the little army was sent on ahead with three men to cross a river called the Embarrass, and told to proceed to a point on the Wabash opposite Vincennes where the Big Gate said there was a plantation—there to steal some boats or canoes to ferry the men across the river when they should reach it. The commissary went

on ahead but soon came back and reported, "The Embarrass is a raging torrent and cannot be crossed."

Clark's party reached the banks of the Embarrass and were only nine miles from Vincennes, but Clark saw that every foot of the way was covered with deep water. So much was the stream swollen that it was impossible to discover the main current. The Wabash, a still deeper and wilder stream, was between the little army and its destination.

A hungry, tired, soaked and mud bespattered band of two hundred men, who in twelve days had marched a hundred and ninety miles and more, now found themselves nine miles from the object of their journey, with food exhausted, no place to camp, with nothing but water all around them and an enemy supposed to consist of several hundred men comfortably housed and fed, to be dislodged. Was ever a hope more forlorn?

A small spot of muddy ground from which the water had receded was found and here the men sat in their wet clothes all night waiting for their Colonel to tell them what to do. All hilarity had gone out of them. There was no wood to make a fire, Clark had forbidden the shooting of their rifles for fear of attracting attention of unfriendly Indians or scouts, what little food they

had was watersoaked. Therefore the men had lost their jest and their spirit of fun. They were silent, worn out, but their faces were as grim as ever, and not a murmur did the Colonel hear from any of them.

Nothing had been heard of *The Willing*. That boat would have been a blessing if it had only appeared, but it was also having trouble with the swollen streams, and while the Long Knives were plowing their way through the mud and mire, the boat with their supplies was battling with the currents of the Ohio and the Wabash.

The Embarrass and the Wabash had to be crossed. Therefore orders were given for the men to build canoes or flat boats or rafts, or anything that would take them over. With great labor the boats were finally finished and the men began the ferrying across the current of the stream. It was a tedious and at times a perilous undertaking. A few men would get into the frail crafts and find their way over the river, and two of them would bring the boat back. Then others would go over. It was a hard journey and the men suffered from the fatigue of it. More than once a boat was overturned and its occupants thrown into the rapid current. But they were all strong swimmers, and there was never any danger of losing any of them. The

The men plunged into the water, holding their guns and powder flasks over their heads.

horses could not be carried over, and the current was too swift for them to swim. Therefore they were left in care of a guard detached for that purpose.

After several days of toil, the men were at last on the same side of the Wabash as the town of Vincennes. But all around them was water, and only a small bit of ground was dry enough for the men to rest upon. Huddled together as they were, unable to have a fire, with no food, the men were in a desperate condition. A few lay down in the mud, completely exhausted from weariness and lack of food, and declared they could go no further. Clark spoke to them:

"We will rest here all night, and do the best we can, and move on in the morning. Keep up your courage, men. Vincennes is only a few miles off, there is no river to cross now, and once there we will have all the rest and food you need."

The men were too tired and weak to cheer, or to respond. They would follow Clark to the very end, and die before they would turn back, but this was the hardest test of their loyalty that had been put upon them.

"Where is Tim?" inquired Clark, anxiously, for he had almost lost sight of the lad.

One of the men pointed to a huddled heap

over under a tree. "There he is, almost worn out, but as game a little fellow as you will ever see."

Clark went to where the boy lay and bent over him. "Poor little drummer boy," said he, almost to himself.

But the lad was not asleep, and leaping up saluted the Colonel as he should. "Tim, when was the last time you ate?" demanded Clark. "Yesterday, sir, a bit of wet bread, but I am not too hungry to do what you want."

"Then lie down and go to sleep if you can," said Clark, and passed on.

The next morning the men arose from their half stupor and gazed upon the long waste of water around them. The lands were drowned for miles along the banks of the swollen streams. The order was given to march and the men fell in. "We may reach Vincennes tonight," were the cheerful words of the commander.

The men plunged into the water, holding their guns and powder flasks over their heads. The water was always three feet deep and in some places up to the waists of the men as they struggled along. Once Tim went over his head, but McCarty was near him and seized the boy in his arms and placed him on his shoulders until the deep part was over. McCarty himself was wading up to his neck. Thus the party went for

three miles until they came to a little hill called the Mamelle where there was dry ground.

The men sank to the earth and fell asleep almost as soon as they lay down. Their clothes were wet and they had not eaten for forty-eight hours. The rain had ceased, but the weather became cold, and by morning everything was frozen.

Clark did not sleep. He posted no guard for there was not a man able to do sentry duty. He kept his own watch during the long, dark hours, rising every now and then to look the camp over and see that the men were not freezing to death. He smiled when he saw them piled close together for warmth, Tim in the midst of them.

The men arose long before day and began to build fires to save themselves from freezing. Fortunately they gathered enough branches from the trees to start fires with and their gunpowder did the rest.

"This is the last day, men," he called to them, as they stamped their cold feet on the ground, and held their hands to the fire. "We have water between us and Vincennes, but one more plunge and a few miles march and we will be there. Come follow me."

Then with a war whoop he plunged into the water and started forward. The men fell in silently behind him. The Colonel ordered those

near him to start a favorite song. This they did. The others caught the words and soon the whole line was singing.

But not for long. The men were almost frozen, and were fighting the ice before them, which in still places was a half inch thick. They were half submerged in the icy current and their hands could hardly hold their guns.

Some of the volunteers started back, but Clark saw them in time and ordered Captain Bowman to bring up the rear line and to shoot any man who deserted. At the end of a mile the whole line slackened. "Colonel, we can go no further. The men are slipping and falling now. The strong are holding up the weak. We will not desert, but we will all drown," was the cry.

There was but one mile more of the water, for Clark had already seen dry land ahead. The men were all up to their waists and some up to their shoulders, staggering, muttering, and swearing at the hard luck. Clark saw the fearful plight of his half drowned army and turned to find Tim.

The lad was being carried by Big Gate and his Indian followers on a kind of stretcher they had made of poles. Calling them to his side, he selected a big sergeant, who appeared to have more strength than the others and said to Tim,

"Mount the shoulders of this man, Tim, and beat your drum for the men to march by."

Tim was equal to the occasion. The sergeant heaved him up on his shoulders and handed him his drum and sticks. The boy began to beat the march of the troops and to sing a lively song. The men raised a feeble shout, gripped harder than ever their wet rifles and took hold of the trail for a last effort.

An hour painfully passed. The drum beat steadily while Clark's own voice rose over the water, and through the bushes, "On, men, a little further and there is dry ground."

The strongest reached the low hill where there was safety and shouted a glad cry. In a moment fires were started to cheer those still struggling behind. One by one they came on and fell before the blazing logs hardly able to go a step more. But Tim did not stop beating his drum until the last man was pulled onto the land.

And now a fortunate circumstance saved the army. In about two hours after reaching the hill, an Indian canoe came by, in which was a squaw and four children. The Indian woman stopped out of curiosity to see the white men. The canoe contained a quarter of buffalo, some corn and some tallow, and a few kettles.

The men now shouted in real earnest. It did

not take long to cook the meat and the corn in the kettles. Broth was immediately made and served to the weaker ones. Nearly all got a little, but the stronger gave of their portion to those most needing it, saying something to cheer them as they eagerly devoured the needed food.

The next day a short march over dry land brought them in full view of the object of their attack. Vincennes lay before them, two miles distant. Every man feasted his eyes on the village. The rain was over, the sun was shining, the spirits of the Long Knives returned in the same vigor they had when they were before Kaskaskia. The men forgot their sufferings in anticipation of what was ahead of them.

A scouting party was sent forward and soon returned with a Frenchman who had been hunting and the firing of whose gun disclosed his presence. Clark questioned him closely.

"No, General Hamilton does not expect any enemy to approach the fort at this time of the year. If you are the Americans of whom he has spoken he will be surprised."

"How about the people of Vincennes?" asked the Colonel. But the Frenchman only shrugged his shoulders, as much as to say it made no difference to him or to them who was master of Fort Sackville, so long as they were left undisturbed.

Tim did not stop beating his drum until the last man was pulled onto the land.

The man was dismissed with a note addressed to the inhabitants of the place telling them that the Long Knives would attack the town in a few hours, that they were friends of the French and meant them no harm, and that the people must remain in their houses and keep off the streets or be treated as enemies. The man was given a few hours start and Clark about sunset started his own forces on the march.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE NEW AMERICAN NORTHWEST

HAMILTON had finished his fort, and his men were housed. On the very day he moved in, a scout named Maisonville returned from a trip down the Ohio, bringing in two prisoners whom he had captured. They were Americans going from Fort Pitt to Kaskaskia.

On going into the fort, Maisonville took the General aside and said to him, "I saw some fires a few miles below Vincennes, but I could not tell whether they were made by Virginians or by Indians."

Hamilton questioned the prisoners but they could tell him nothing. "They are probably some wandering hunters caught by the rains in the woods. Nothing but birds could come over these waters from Kaskaskia. There are miles and miles of water over the trail, and to think of men from Virginia at this time of the year is foolish."

Therefore the General laid aside his fears and betook himself to playing cards with the officers,

a game of which he was very fond. The day passed and the evening came on. There was an unusual stir among the better class of the inhabitants and groups of them were gathered together discussing something of interest. An attentive listener could have heard the words "Clark" and "the Americans," for the matter of interest was the letter sent by the American commander a few hours before. Still no one of them told Hamilton of what was impending and he was too much occupied to observe anything unusual.

The candles were lighted in the fort and in the houses of the village. Suddenly the garrison was aroused by the discharge of guns just outside the gates. "Those Indians are drunk again," exclaimed Hamilton, and started for the door. Hardly had he gotten outside and on the parade ground, when he heard the whistling of bullets as they went through the air and struck the fort. It did not take the Lieutenant-Governor long to get back under cover.

The garrison rushed to the fort and closed the windows and doors. "Do not fire until you are certain we are attacked," were the quick orders. The matter was soon settled, for a sergeant received a bullet in his breast and staggered back into the room.

It was too dark for Hamilton to see his enemy

though the moon was shining but he knew they could come from but one direction. "The Americans!" he exclaimed to his men. "Surely they have not crossed those raging rivers."

As a matter of fact there were two people in the fort who were already informed of the approach of Clark. One was Moses Henry, a prisoner like Helm, whose wife was allowed to bring him provisions daily, and the other was Captain Helm. As soon as Clark's letter arrived she had heard of it, and going with her basket of food to her husband she managed to whisper to him, "The Americans, five hundred in number, are within a mile of Vincennes and will attack tonight. Tell the Captain, but no one else."

Henry managed to convey the word to Helm, but neither of them showed by their faces or conduct that anything unusual was about to happen.

Helm was one of the men with whom the General was playing cards. The Captain at once had recognized the peculiar roar of the Long Knives' rifles, for he had heard it often enough. His heart leaped for joy, but he gave no sign of his knowledge.

Smilingly he said, "If Clark has come, he is here too soon, for he has broken up our game of cards. Let me see if it can be the Colonel and his men."

So saying, he placed a lighted candle in front of a window and throwing open the shutters dodged quickly. In a moment came a flash and a report from a gun not far away. There was a puff of wind as a bullet swept over the candle neatly extinguishing the light and burying itself in the wall opposite the window.

"Yes, they are the Long Knives," said Helm, coolly. "Put out all the lights while I close this window, or we will all be extinguished as was that candle."

Clark had entered the town about seven o'clock, and had at once gone to the houses of several of the principal inhabitants, led by the Big Gate, who knew everyone there. In a few minutes every Frenchman was in his own house, with lights out and doors closed. Then the Long Knives took possession of the streets, and opened fire on the fort as we have described above. The Colonel had no fear of the people, for he let them believe he had five hundred men with him, and they were fully as bloodthirsty as the reputation they bore.

It was now clear to Hamilton that an enemy was assailing his post. In fact, Clark was throwing up entrenchments in the street about two hundred feet from the gate and the noise made by

the soldiers could be easily heard. The fort was surrounded, but there was silence for awhile.

A fierce banging at the door was heard. Upon being opened in the shadows cautiously by a guard, there fell into the room a Doctor MacBeath, who happened to be in town at the time and who had heard the news of Clark's coming. He had stumbled over to the fort and hidden himself just as the firing commenced. When it ceased he crawled out and knocked at the door for admittance. It was the sheerest luck that he was not discovered and killed by a shot from the Long Knives.

"Clark and five hundred men are here. The French are shut up in their houses and will be murdered tonight. Tomorrow we may all share their fate. Where can we hide or how can we escape?"

"Shut up, you fool!" cried Hamilton, angrily. "The Long Knives are not savages, and we shall not be murdered. Get a gun and be ready to fight like a man, or else use your skill on that poor sergeant in yonder room with a bullet in his breast."

The doctor forgot his fears in his profession, and turned to the sufferer who was in sad need of his attention.

The Indian allies of the British in Vincennes

at the time were surprised beyond measure at the appearance of the whites. Not having the support of the presence of Hamilton, the unfriendly savages ran for the woods and quickly escaped. Clark gladly let them go, which was in short order, much hastened by the yells and war whoops of the Big Gate and his followers. In fact some of the Piankeshaws were in town and had already rallied around their chief and added much to the noise of the occasion.

Since *The Willing* had not yet been heard from, and much of the powder and balls were stored on that boat, Clark found it necessary to demand ammunition of the inhabitants, as well as food for his famished men. While the trenches were being dug, he easily managed by a detachment of soldiers to get all he wanted from the eager and willing people. Thus his own men were fed and supplied with what they needed to attack the fort, and consequently were in good spirits as the night wore on.

Clark's men were now behind their trenches, and some were protected by houses and barns, so that there was not much danger of their being shot. Hamilton began to return the fire of his enemy, but not seeing any of them his guns did little damage except to the village itself.

The Americans were in high glee. "We've

got 'em all penned up and they can't get away. This for the Hair Buyer," they said, as they discharged their rifles.

The firing from both sides kept up during the night. The moon set about one o'clock and the village became quite dark. Only the flashes of the guns of the riflemen in the streets, and from the barricade of the houses and barns, and the reply of the guns from the fort lighted the darkness.

During the night a scouting party of about twenty British and French returned, and on reaching the commons behind the town heard to their great surprise a discharge of musketry. Not knowing the cause they secreted themselves in a barn and awaited developments. The party was led by a Frenchman named Lamothe. He and his comrades, half of whom were British soldiers, lay concealed until daylight. They knew little else than that the town and fort were attacked and probably by the terrible Americans from Kaskaskia.

Clark heard that the party had arrived but did not know where they were concealed. "They will probably make off unless we let them all get in the fort. Then we can bag the whole crowd," said he to Captain Bowman.

"Yes," was the reply, "If they get off they

may stir up those Indians that ran away and bring them back on the warpath. It is best to let them all get together."

A little before day the troops were withdrawn from their position around the fort, and orders were given to cease firing. Also the men were told not to interfere with Lamothe and his men if they made a dash for the fort, unless there was a chance of capturing the entire party.

In less than a quarter of an hour Lamothe and his party appeared sneaking around the houses and approaching the fort. They passed within ten feet of an officer and a lot of men that lay concealed. Ladders were thrown to them from the inside by which they could climb over the palisade. The party began to mount the ladders and were in the act of getting over the palisade when Clark's men shouted and raised a war whoop. This terrified the British and French so much that they fell off the ladders, some inside and some outside the fort. But as they were not fired on, they all scrambled up the ladders again and leaped inside much to the joy of their friends and to the amusement of the Long Knives, who could easily have killed every one of them.

The firing began again on both sides, and lasted until about nine o'clock in the morning.

Clark sent a note under a flag of truce, demanding of Hamilton that he surrender. The letter contained the threat: "If I am obliged to storm the fort you may depend upon such treatment as is justly due a murderer."

While the letter was being conveyed to the British commander Clark's men took occasion to scatter among the houses of the people and provide themselves with breakfast, which was the only decent meal they had eaten in eighteen days.

Hamilton assembled his men and read them the note. He then told them, "I am not disposed to surrender to such people as these. If they want this fort they will have to come and get it. What is your opinion?"

The British soldiers declared they would defend the King's colors and stick to Hamilton "like the shirt on his back." They then gave three cheers, and swore they were not afraid of any Americans no matter where they came from. The few French soldiers with Lamothe's party said nothing.

Hamilton replied to Clark's note. "Governor Hamilton begs leave to acquaint Colonel Clark that he and his garrison are not disposed to be awed into any action unworthy of a British sub-

ject"—a soldierly reply indeed, but ill fitting as a boast considering his past offences.

The firing commenced warmly. Clark had to restrain his men who were apt to expose themselves in their eagerness. The demand from many was, "Let us storm this fort, batter down the gate and kill or take prisoners the Hair Buyer and all his men." But the Colonel held his men in check, knowing that the surrender would come soon enough.

And now the marksmanship of the Long Knives began to appear as the sun grew bright and the sighting of the rifles was easy. Through openings in the trenches or from doors and windows of houses and barns the two hundred men slowly took aim at every loop hole, crack, opening and crevice in the fort, and fired their shots so accurately that many of them found their way inside.

Helm had warned the men to keep away from the loop holes which were used for firing guns from the fort. "If you try to look through them you may get hurt."

One of the men more adventurous than the others disregarded the advice and put his eye to a hole to see what was going on outside. A sharp report came from a nearby house. A ball crashed through the narrow opening, striking the soldier

in the eye. He fell back into the arms of his companions, the blood streaming over his face.

This dismayed the soldiers considerably, since six of them were badly wounded. The French soldiers declared they had had enough and were not going to fire at all, since it appeared that their friends and relatives had already joined the Americans.

Hamilton realized that his boast of holding the fort was an idle one and that he would have to surrender sooner or later, but he was resolved to get the best terms possible. Clark was bent on no terms except complete and unconditional surrender.

It was midday, and of a sudden the firing from the fort ceased. Clark was about to yield to the entreaties of his men to make an assault upon the palisades, but hearing the guns no longer in action he ordered his own men to desist.

A flag of truce was seen to be approaching from the fort. Clark recognized Captain Helm as its bearer. Helm was on parole and forbore any cordial greetings from himself to his superior officer though he rejoiced to see him again.

Helm saluted and said, "Lieutenant-Governor Hamilton is willing to surrender the fort and garrison, provided Colonel Clark will grant him

honorable terms. The Governor requests the Colonel to come into the fort for a conference."

To this Clark promptly replied, "I shall not agree to any terms except surrender at my discretion. I shall give Governor Hamilton one half hour to consider my answer. As to my entering the fort, that is out of the question."

Helm saluted and withdrew. In a half hour he returned with the flag of truce and said, "Governor Hamilton desires a truce of three days in which there shall be no offensive warfare on either side. If Colonel Clark declines to enter the fort he will see him at the gate."

Clark was not of a very patient temper. He saw no reason for such a delay and although reinforcements from *The Willing* could reasonably be expected within that time, which would make the delay to his advantage, he testily replied, "Tell Governor Hamilton that I have given him my answer. If he desires a conference with me I will meet him at the church. I also desire your presence at the conference, Captain Helm."

The Colonel and the Captain exchanged glances of a happy understanding and separated, the Colonel going to his quarters and the Captain returning to the fort.

All was quiet on the streets. A messenger came into Clark's room and said to him, "I am

informed that a party of Indians is coming up from the Falls of the Ohio with prisoners and scalps, which they have taken over in Kentucky."

"Where are they now?" demanded the Colonel, hastily.

"They are not far from here, probably within a half mile."

"Do my men know about it?"

"Yes, they have heard of it, and are so infuriated that a detachment has already broken away and gone to intercept them."

"May the Lord have mercy on them, if my soldiers take them with scalps in their possession, for some of the men are from Kentucky," said Clark.

The report was true, and some of Clark's men had gone in pursuit of the savages. The party consisted of eight Indians and two Frenchmen. To their great surprise the Long Knives appeared in their path and captured the entire party, except one who made his escape.

In their belts were hung a number of scalps, the blood clotted to the hair of the helpless victims. Seeing them, the Long Knives, maddened with the thought of where the scalps might have been taken, fell upon the Indians and slew three of them at once.

"Let's take the others to town and slay them

in front of the Hair Buyer himself," exclaimed one of the soldiers.

To this the others agreed, and a procession was formed of the four Indians and the two Frenchmen, and the party started toward Vincennes. When they reached the parade ground in front of the fort, there was a crowd of soldiers and citizens around them. The Long Knives stood the four Indians up in a line and shook the scalps at the fort so that Hamilton might see what was going on and the cause. Then seizing their tomahawks they slew the savages and flung their bodies into the river.

The two Frenchmen were dressed like the Indians and were of their party. The Long Knives were for putting them to death also, but one of them had a father in Vincennes who recognized his son and on his knees begged for his life. The other had a sister who threw her arms around his neck and cried piteously for him to be spared.

Clark had come up and did not try to stop the slaying of the Indians. But when he saw the two Frenchmen interceded for in so moving a manner, he ordered them released and delivered to their families, though he muttered to himself, "They are worse than the savages, for they know better, but I cannot withstand a father's prayers and a sister's tears."

Clark and Hamilton soon met in the church for a conference. Helm was present.

"I am ready to surrender my garrison, but I hope Colonel Clark will let me do it with honor," said the Governor.

"I understand you have eight hundred men here. I came to fight that many," replied the Colonel, evasively.

"Your information is incorrect. We have only a small force."

"I know your strength," replied Clark, "and I know I can take your fort. I offer you no other terms except submission to my discretion."

"If I cannot surrender on honorable terms I will fight it out to the last," and Hamilton arose as if to depart.

Clark replied that it would give his men infinite satisfaction to continue the attack, for it was their desire to punish those who had been responsible for so much atrocity in the land from which his men had come.

Turning to Helm the Colonel continued, "Sir, you are a prisoner on parole. I desire you to reconduct General Hamilton into the fort, and there to remain until I take you."

Hamilton still standing, said, "Colonel Clark, why will you force me to dishonor myself, when you cannot acquire more honor by it?"

Hamilton said, "Colonel Clark, why will you force me to dishonor myself?"

"Because, sir," was the heated reply, "could I look upon you as an honorable soldier I would do all in my power to favor you, but you have sent savages into my state and have allowed them to burn, scalp and murder, until you do not deserve anything at my hands. The whole country holds you in horror and detestation."

Hamilton trembled before the accusation, and feebly replied, "My character has been stained by false reports. I could not do otherwise than engage the Indians and when they brought back scalps I was powerless to reprove them. I beg of you, sir—"

"No more," said Clark. "I have heard enough. Captain Helm, take the General back to his fort and prepare for battle. It will begin as soon as you are behind the doors." Clark saluted as if the words he had spoken were final.

"Give me one hour to consult my officers, and I shall return to this place. If you refuse this I shall prepare for defence and meet your attack as best I may," requested the General.

Clark could not well deny this. He knew that Hamilton in all probability would surrender but was not certain. His own men were tired and needed refreshment. "One hour then," said he.

When Hamilton returned to the fort and consulted his officers he explained to them that he

had fewer men than Clark, that reinforcements were out of the question, that provisions and ammunition would not sustain a long siege. "Besides this," said he to his men, "There is the miserable condition of our wounded, the fort has been undermined at one angle, and we cannot escape by land or water if we tried. There is nothing to do but surrender."

At the end of the hour Hamilton returned to the church and accepted such terms of surrender as Clark dictated. The terms were simple. Fort Sackville was to be surrendered with all its stores, provisions, arms and cannon; the garrison was to march out and deliver themselves up as prisoners of war at ten o'clock next day; three days were to be allowed to them to settle their accounts with the merchants.

The word soon passed around that the fort had surrendered. The Long Knives grew jubilant and showed their joy by bonfires and feasting. Hamilton spent the night in gloomy silence assorting his papers and preparing the best report he could to his superior officers.

At ten o'clock on the morning of February 25th, 1779, the companies of Captain Bowman and Captain McCarty paraded in front of the gate of the fort. Clark remained at his headquarters. Hamilton and seventy-nine men

marched out with fixed bayonets and stood at attention. Then by order of their own officers they stacked their guns and formally surrendered to the two American captains. Hamilton and his whole force were put on parole and Clark was in full charge of Vincennes.

Over the fort soon floated the stars and stripes. It was there to greet *The Willing* when it plowed its way painfully up the still swollen Wabash a few days later, and whose officers were much mortified to be too late for the ceremony of changing the name to Fort Patrick Henry.

Two weeks later Clark was in his quarters having a last interview with his prisoner.

"General Hamilton, I have paroled about fifty of your men and allowed them to return to their homes in Detroit. You and twenty-six others, whose conduct I cannot excuse, are to be sent by boat and overland to Williamsburg, to report to Governor Henry as prisoners of war. He will detain you until you are exchanged."

"And what will you do, sir, in this miserable land?"

"I? I shall make myself happy in the contemplation that your surrender has made it possible for all this territory to be added to the domain of the United States when the time comes to make a treaty of peace with your king."

"That may never be, sir," replied the prisoner.

"It will be sooner than you think, for the British people are weary of this war and are ill-disposed toward your stubborn ruler. I wish you well, on your journey to your prison. I have sent my regards to Governor Henry by a messenger, with full details of all that has happened."

Hamilton made no reply. He was ready to depart in a boat where the other prisoners had by this time been placed. He saluted the Colonel with ill-concealed mortification.

"One thing more," said Clark. "This drummer boy here, whose name is Tim, will precede you and beat his drum for you and your guard to march by on your way to the boats."

In a few moments the beat of a drum was heard in the street, with a more martial sound than it ever had before and Clark knew that Tim was having the proudest moment of his life.

The Colonel bent his head to his hands and thought of Vincennes and Kentucky, his home, his friends, his kindred. Outside the Long Knives were already babbling of home ties, but not one was impatient to leave before the Colonel gave the word. The day wore on in silence. The night came and Vincennes with its conquerors slept peacefully with the stars and stripes waving over an American territory.

Three years passed and the scene changes to Paris. Cornwallis had surrendered at Yorktown, and the war of the Revolution was over. The American commissioners were arranging terms of the treaty of peace between the United States and Great Britain. The independence of the colonies was quickly conceded. When it came to boundary lines, Benjamin Franklin remarked, "We will keep what we have conquered. George Rogers Clark has won the northwest territory moving the line of possession from the Ohio to the Lakes."

There was no denying the statement. In the end it was agreed that all that territory should become a part of the common union.

Nearly a hundred and fifty years have passed since then. The savage no longer roams along the Illinois or builds his wigwam on the banks of the Wabash. The little villages of the pioneer have disappeared and the trails no longer lead through the forest. Millions of people have moved onto the rich prairies, and into the deep woods. Great cities have sprung up, and roaring trains rush over lands where the pioneer made his painful journey; vast fields of grain wave where once was only prairie grass; great factories hum where once was only the sound of wind in the trees.

We wonder how many of these millions know that to the intrepid courage of a young Virginian and his band of sturdy followers is due the good fortune that brings them under the happy influence of the American flag.

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